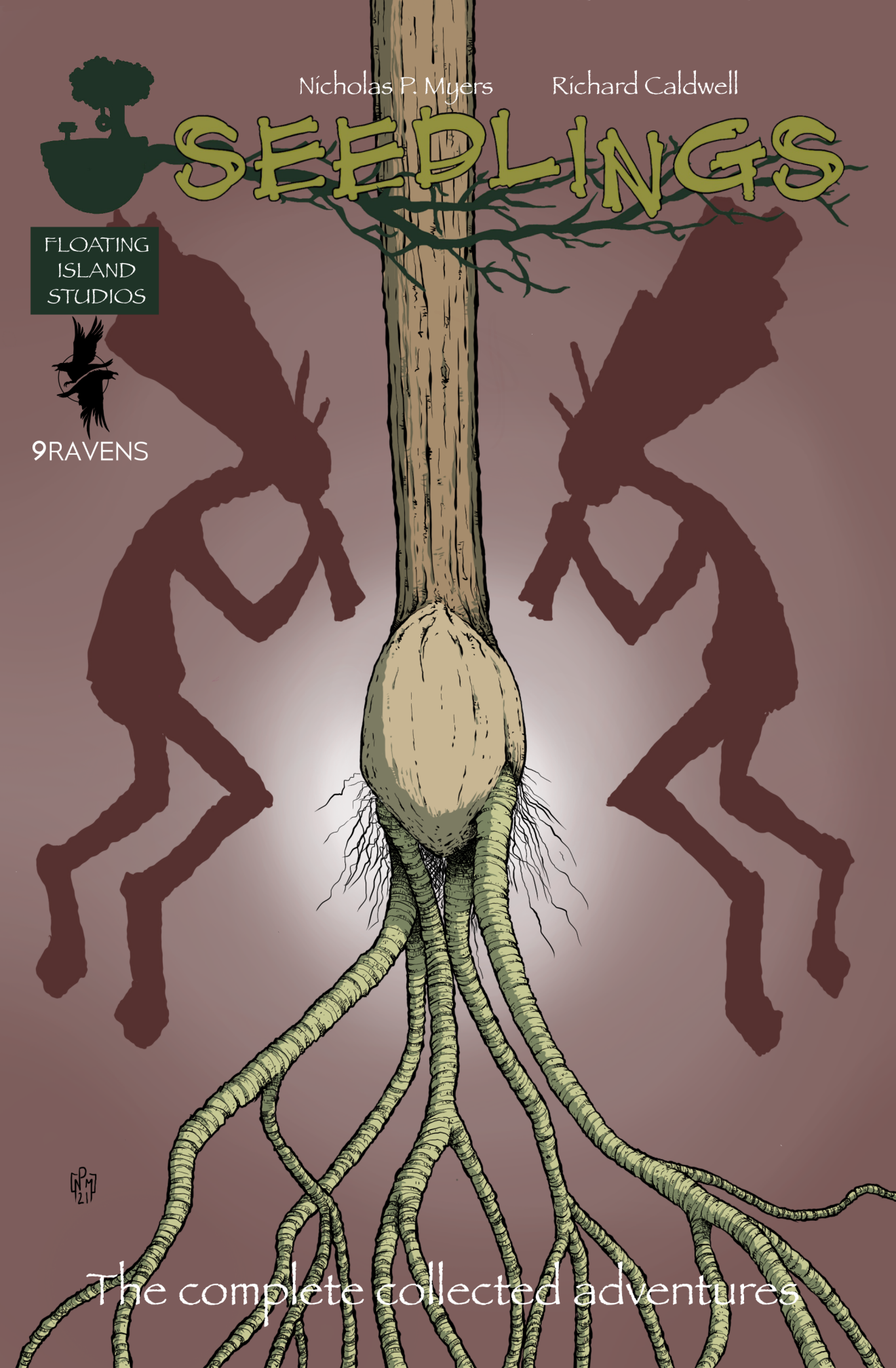
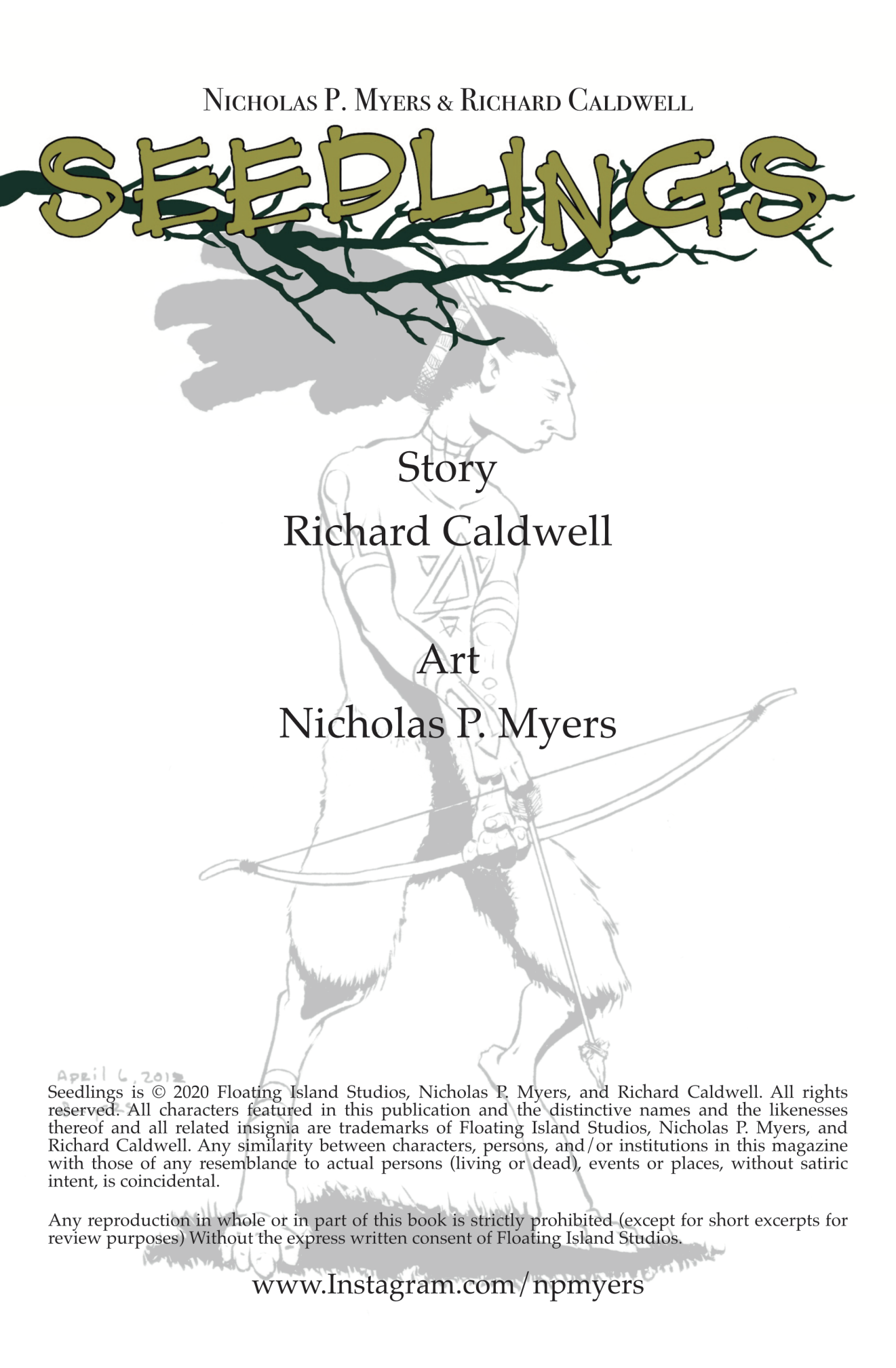

Nicholas P. Myers
Richard Caldwell
SEEDLINGS
FLOATING ISLAND STUDIOS
9RAVENS
The complete collected adventures

Nicholas P. Myers & Richard Caldwell

SEEDLINGS



Story

Richard Caldwell

Art

Nicholas P. Myers

Seedlings is © 2020 Floating Island Studios, Nicholas P. Myers, and Richard Caldwell. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this publication and the distinctive names and the likenesses thereof and all related insignia are trademarks of Floating Island Studios, Nicholas P. Myers, and Richard Caldwell. Any similarity between characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events or places, without satiric intent, is coincidental.

Any reproduction in whole or in part of this book is strictly prohibited (except for short excerpts for review purposes) Without the express written consent of Floating Island Studios.

www.Instagram.com/npmyers

Issue One: The End

Created by: Nicholas P. Myers
Story by: Nicholas P. Myers and Richard Caldwell
Script by: Richard Caldwell
Artwork and letters by: Nicholas P. Myers

NO, THAT'S TOTALLY A FIRE ENGINE.
WHAT'S A FIRE ENGINE?
GUYS, YOU'RE ALL SILLY IN THE HEAD. THAT IS CLEARLY A SEA MONSTER.
OH.
WAIT, WHAT'S A SEA MONSTER?

WELL... I GUESS IT'S TIME FOR US TO SAY OUR GOODBYES TO GRANDMUM.
I WONDER IF...
I WONDER IF THE CLOUDS WILL LOOK THE SAME FROM WHEREVER IT IS WE ALL END UP.
WHEN DO THE CLOUDS EVER LOOK THE SAME THOUGH?

REMEMBER, STELLA, THAT THE SEED OF FATHER TREE IS MORE IMPORTANT EVEN THAN YOU, MY GRANDDAUGHTER. IN IT ARE THE ROOTS WAITING TO SPROUT, TO CONNECT MY OWN GRANDMUM TO YOUR GRANDDAUGHTER YET TO BE.

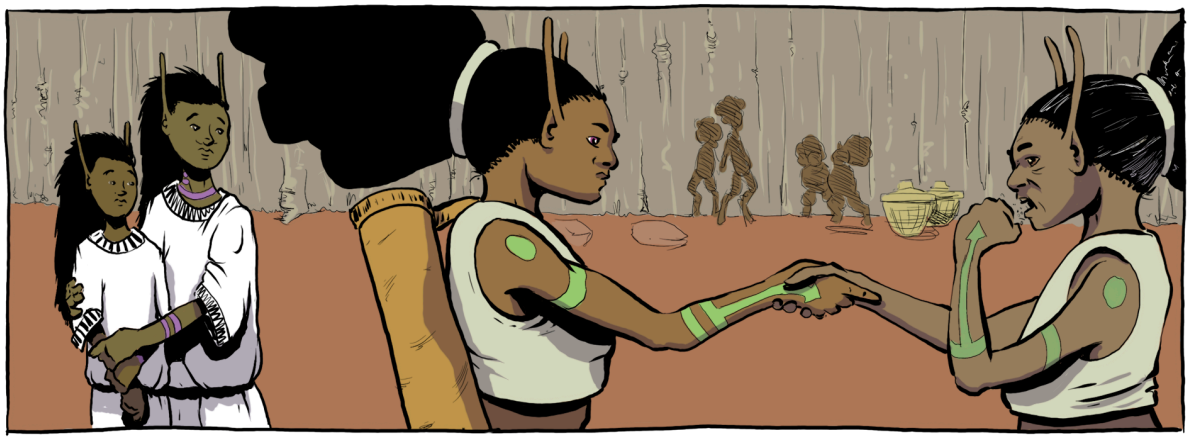
BONK!!!
OH, I SEE WHO YOUR FAVORITE IS NOW...

I WILL NEVER LET YOU DOWN, GRANNY. I JUST WISH WE COULD SEE YOU AGAIN SOMEDAY.

DEARY, IF YOU STAY HERE YOU WILL ALL DIE WITH THE REST OF US. IT IS THE WILL OF THE FATHER TREE. I WANT YOU, ALL OF YOU, TO LIVE.

EVERY FEW GENERATIONS FATHER TREE NEEDS TO STRETCH HIS LEGS. HE WANTS TO BE BORN AGAIN OR ELSE HE WITHERS AND THE TRIBE STARTS TO GET SICK. WE WAITED TOO LONG, DIDN'T WE GRANDMUM?
YES, MY BRIGHTEST, WE WAITED MUCH TOO LONG.

WE FINISHED CHISELING THE NEW GEARS LAST NIGHT. I DON'T KNOW WHY WE NEVER THOUGHT OF THIS DESIGN BEFORE.
GOLLY.
GRANDMUM... I THINK WE'RE READY.
IS ANYBODY EVER REALLY READY?
READY TO SAY GOODBYE? NEVER.

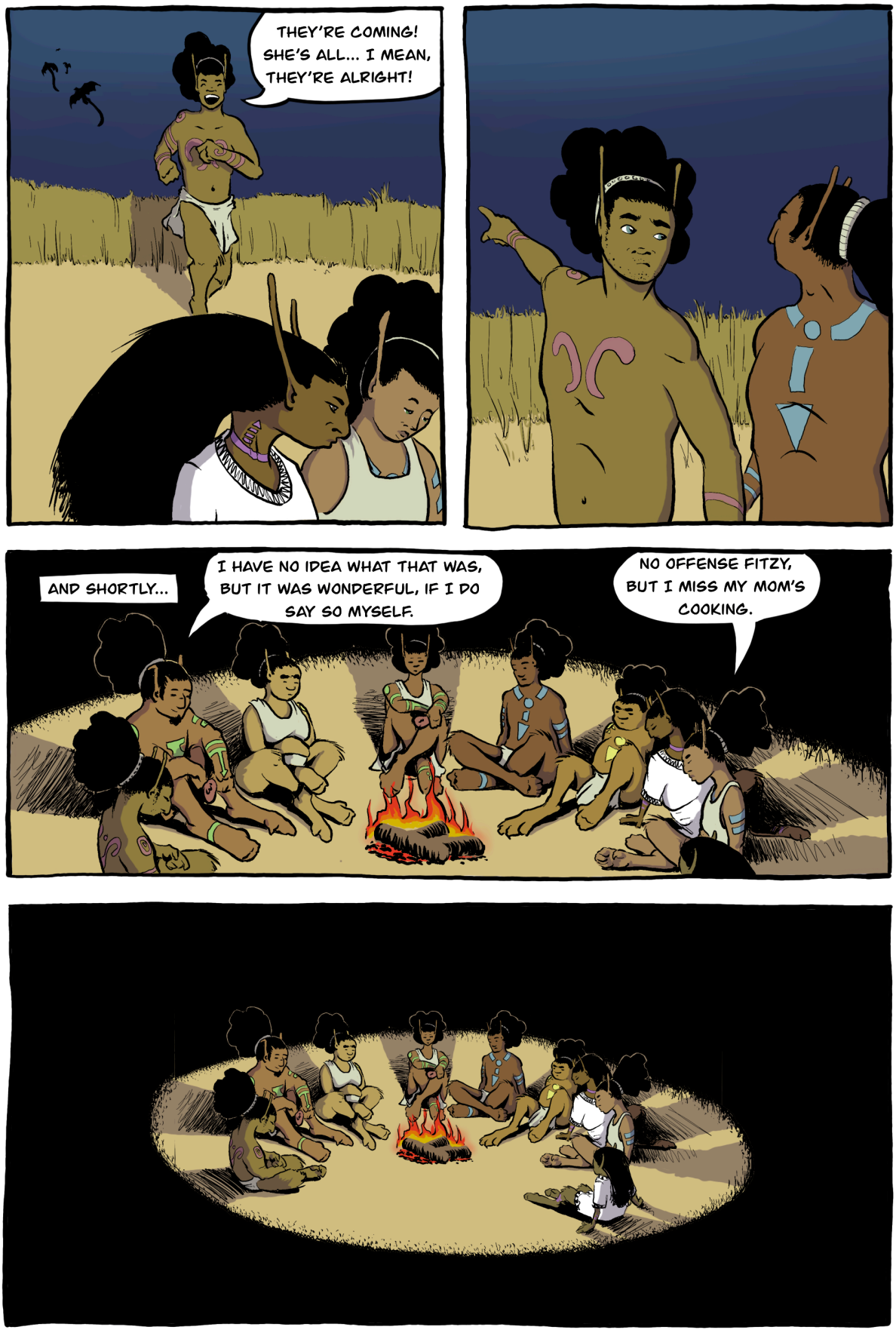


"GOODBYE MY YOUNGEST, MY HEALTHIEST... SAFE JOURNEYS, MY LITTLE WARRIORS TO BE..."

WILL WE NEVER SEE THEM AGAIN?
NO. WE WON'T.

DAYS LATER, ON THE ROAD TO WHO KNOWS WHERE...
ZOUNDS IT, STELLA! YOU GOT THE LAST ONE! THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE MY TURN.
HEY, I LEARNED FROM THE BEST.
AND WHO WAS THAT?
YOU, OF COURSE. NOW C'MON, HELP ME CARVE THIS OUT SO WE DON'T HAVE TO DRAG THE WHOLE THING BACK TO CAMP.

THEY BETTER GET BACK SOON. IT'S STARTING TO GET DARK.
YOU'RE WORRYING ABOUT THOSE HOWLS WE HEARD LAST NIGHT?
I WORRY ABOUT EVERYTHING - SO YOU GUYS DON'T HAVE TO.
THANKS FOR THAT, FEARLESS LEADER.
GOOFBALL.


THEY'RE COMING! SHE'S ALL... I MEAN, THEY'RE ALRIGHT!
AND SHORTLY...
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THAT WAS, BUT IT WAS WONDERFUL, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF.
NO OFFENSE FITZY, BUT I MISS MY MOM'S COOKING.

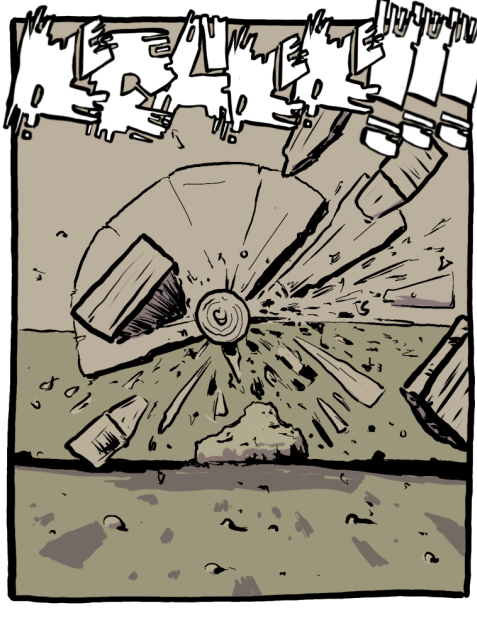
AND SOME MORE DAYS LATER, ON A ROAD TO WHO KNOWS WHERE...
RRRR

NOT IN THIS LIFETIME YOU GRIZZLY, STINKING MUTT!
YIPE!!!
THAT... WAS REALLY FREAKIN' COOL.
AND SEXY!
BUT WHAT'S NOT COOL IS THAT WE HEARD MULTIPLE HOWLS LAST NIGHT. THEY'VE BEEN FOLLOWING US FOR A WEEK. THERE'S GOING TO BE MORE, I JUST KNOW IT.

I WANT TO GO HOME!!!
WE CAN'T GO BACK THOUGH, LITTLE BOOKWORM. GRANDMUM SAID THE ONLY WAY THE TRIBE CAN LIVE IS IF WE FIND A SAFE PLACE FOR THE SEED OF THE FATHER TREE.
SO WE PLANT THE SEED SOMEWHERE NEW AND SAFE, BUT WHAT ABOUT EVERYONE ELSE?! DON'T ANY OF YOU REALIZE THAT ALL OF THE PEOPLE WE LEFT BEHIND ARE PROBABLY DEAD ALREADY FROM THE SICKNESS?!
OF COURSE WE KNOW THAT, GILLESPIE, BUT WE AREN'T SUPPOSED TO SAY THAT OUT LOUD.
GILLESPIE, THAT WAS NOT COOL!! WE HAVE TO LOOK OUT FOR THE KIDS, NOT SCARE THE WITS OUT OF THEM!
DON'T BE SO HARD ON HIM, STELLA. YOU KNOW HIS FOLKS WERE THE FIRST TO GO, MONTHS BACK WHEN THE ELDERS FIRST STARTED COUGHING ALL DAY AND HAVING NIGHTMARES ALL NIGHT, WHEN WE WERE ALL STILL TOGETHER.

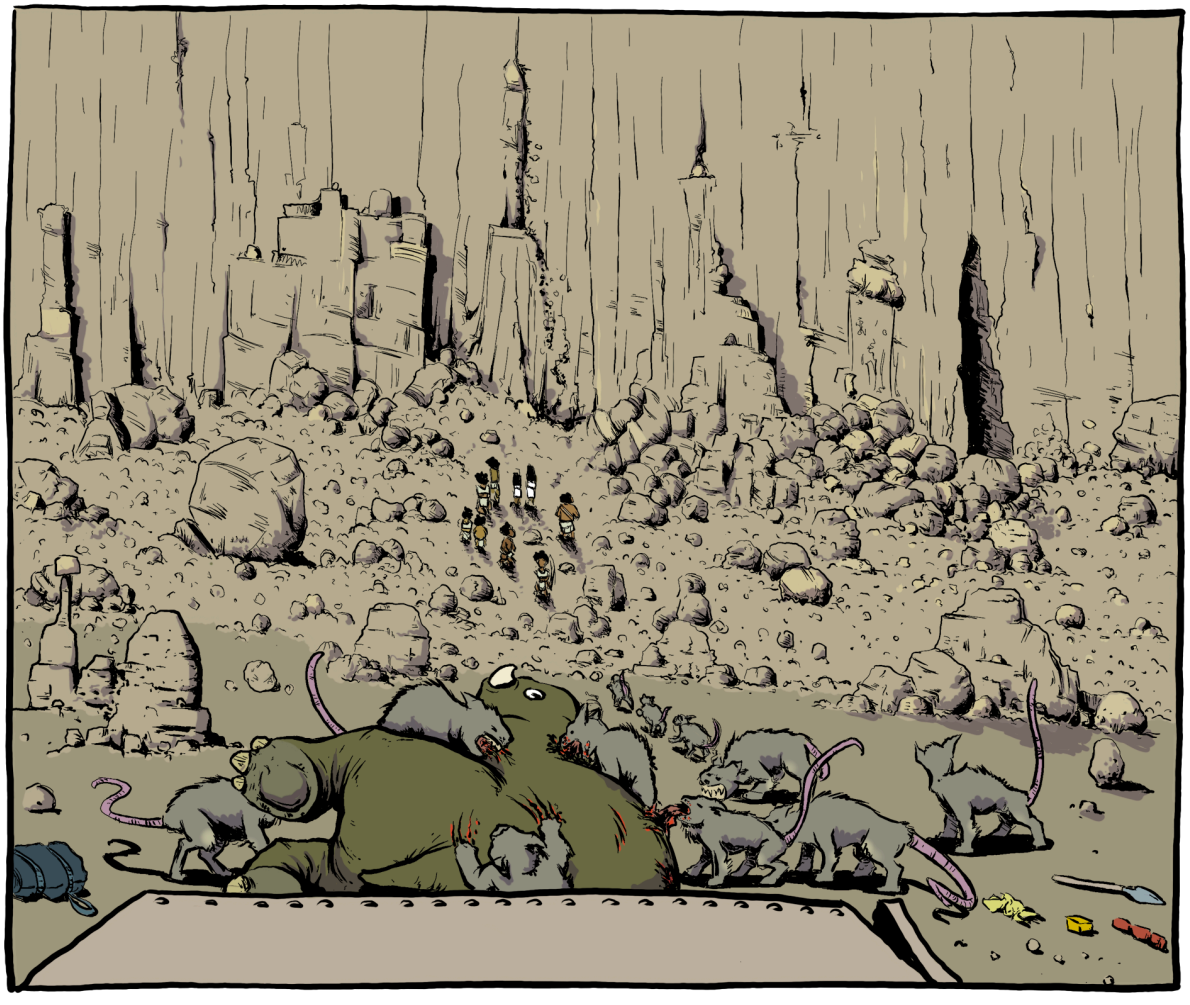
THE FOLLOWING MORNING...
I WANTED... I WANTED TO APOLOGIZE...
DON'T SWEAT IT GILLESPIE. WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER.
WOLVES!!!

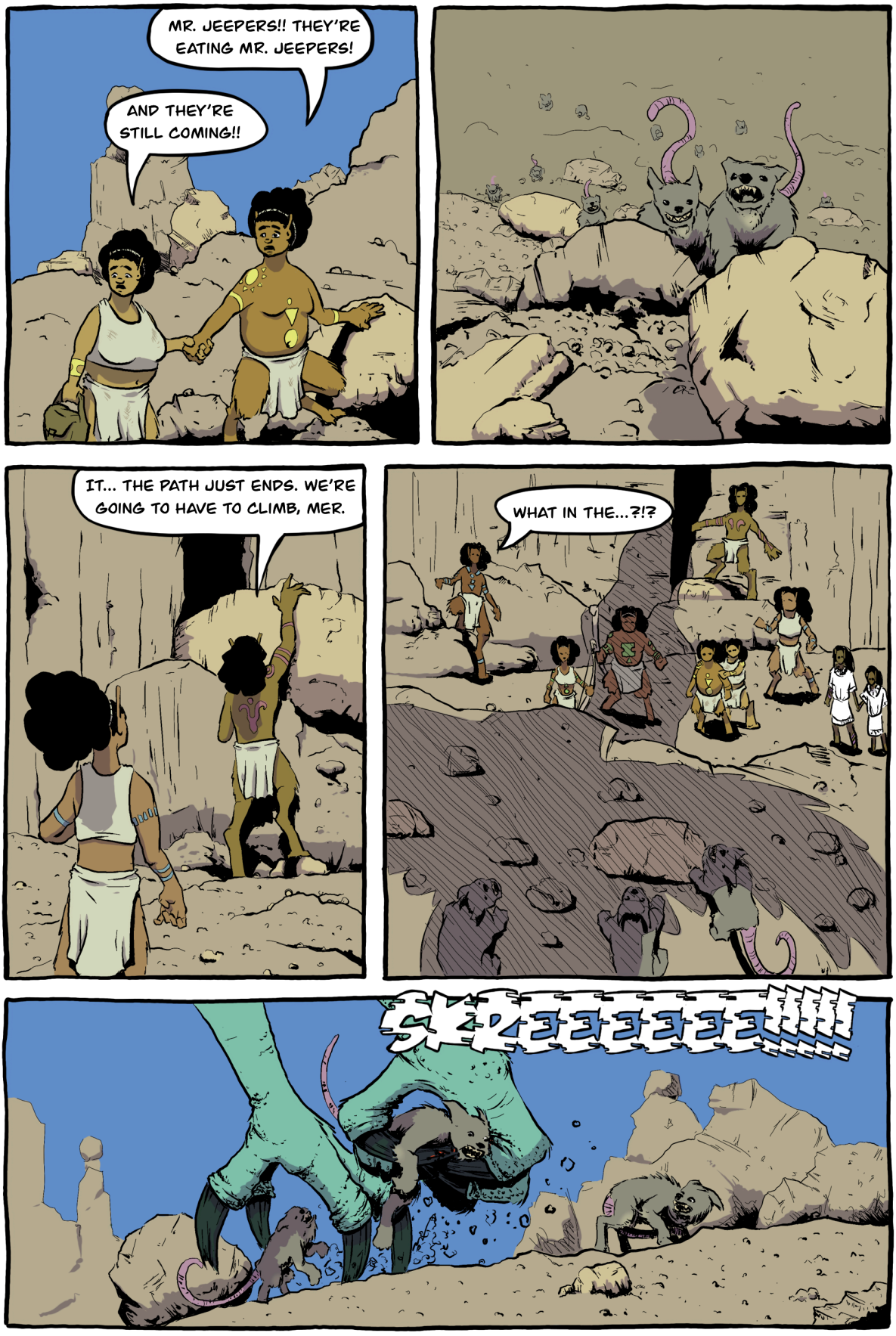
WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE A RUN FOR IT!
THEY'RE EVERYWHERE!



DON'T WORRY LITTLE SPROUTS, I'VE GOT YOU.

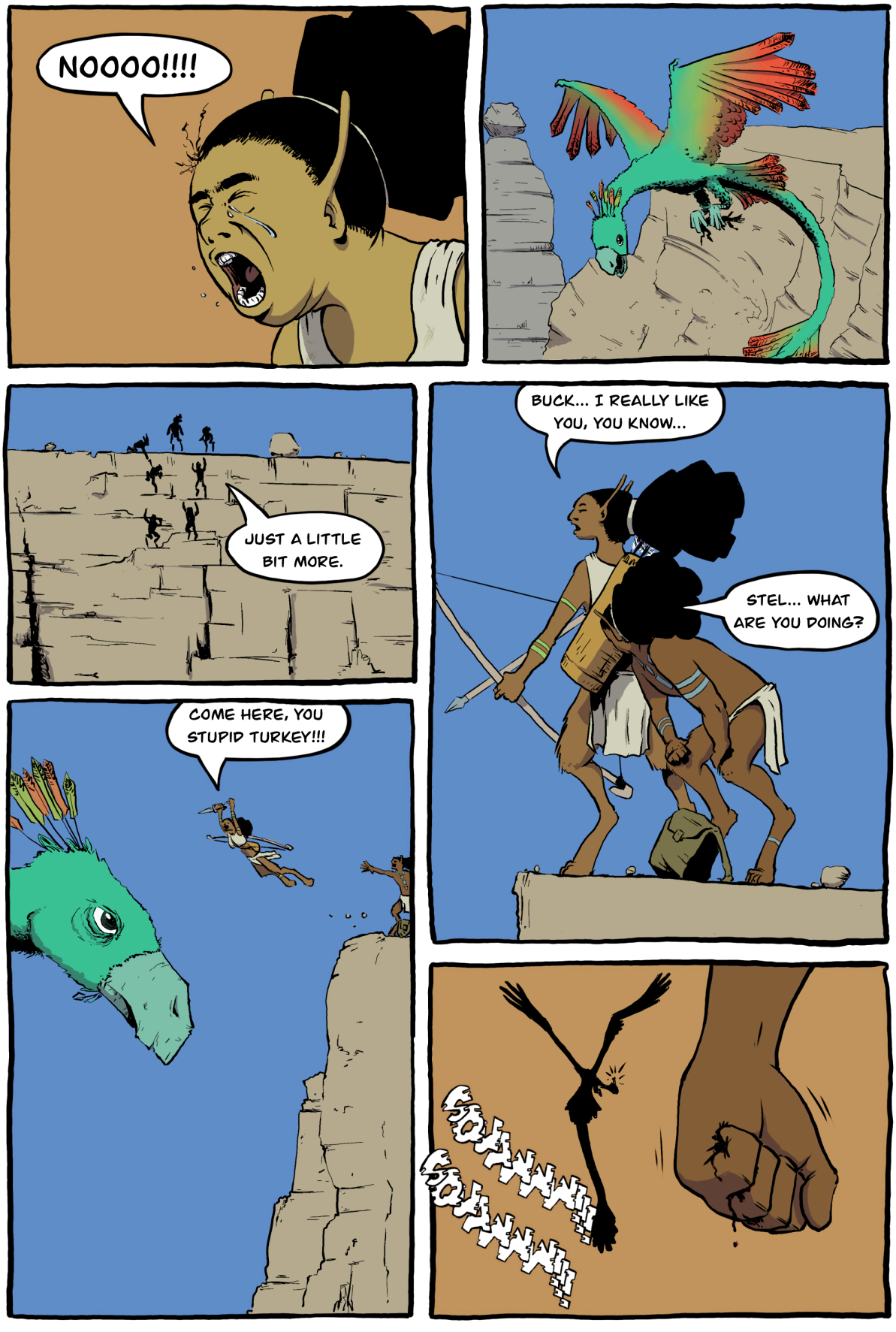
KEEP ON GOING!! THESE WOLVES CAN'T BE MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS!



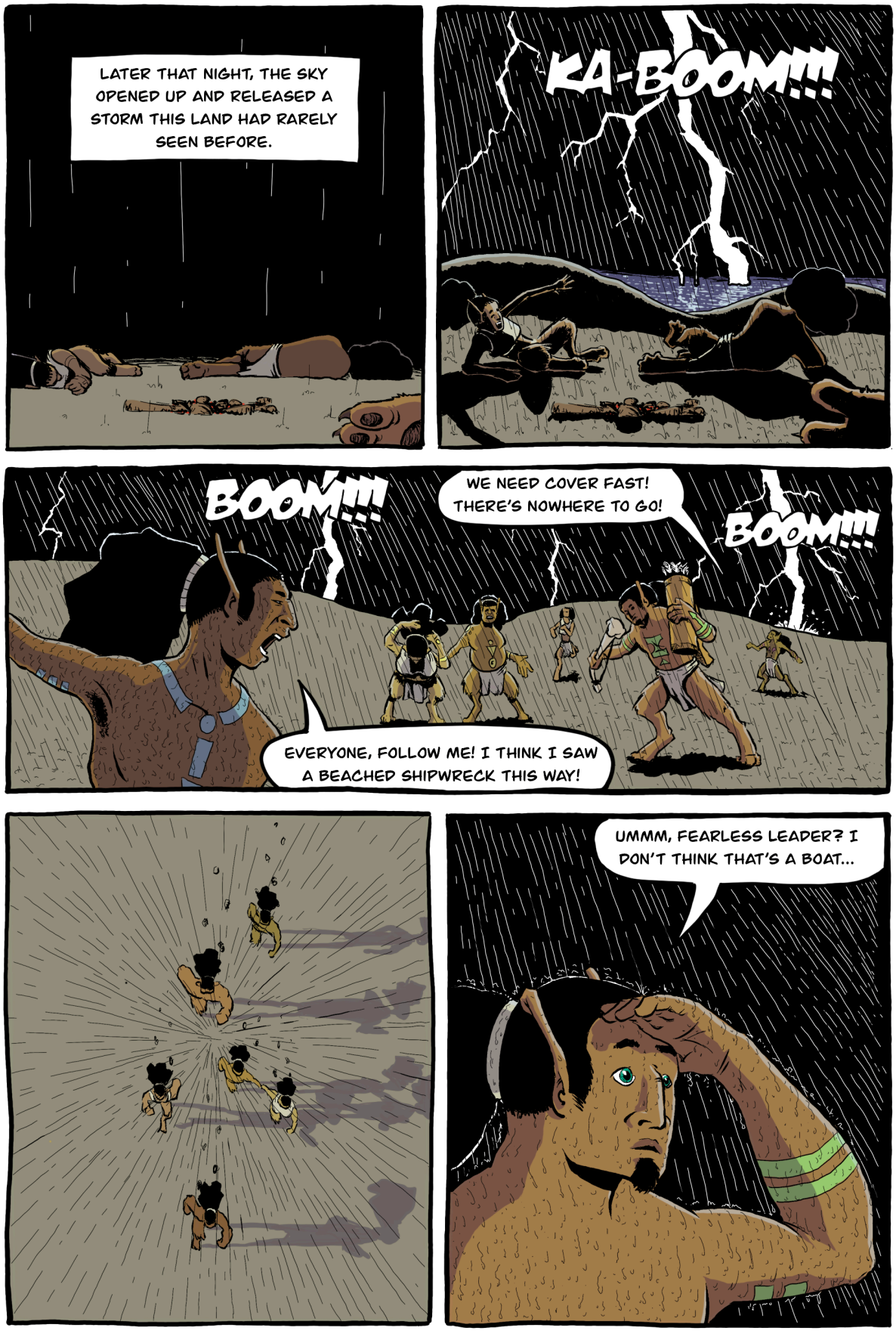

MR. JEEPERS!! THEY'RE EATING MR. JEEPERS!
AND THEY'RE STILL COMING!!
IT... THE PATH JUST ENDS. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO CLIMB, MER.
WHAT IN THE...?!?
SKEEEEEEEKS!!!

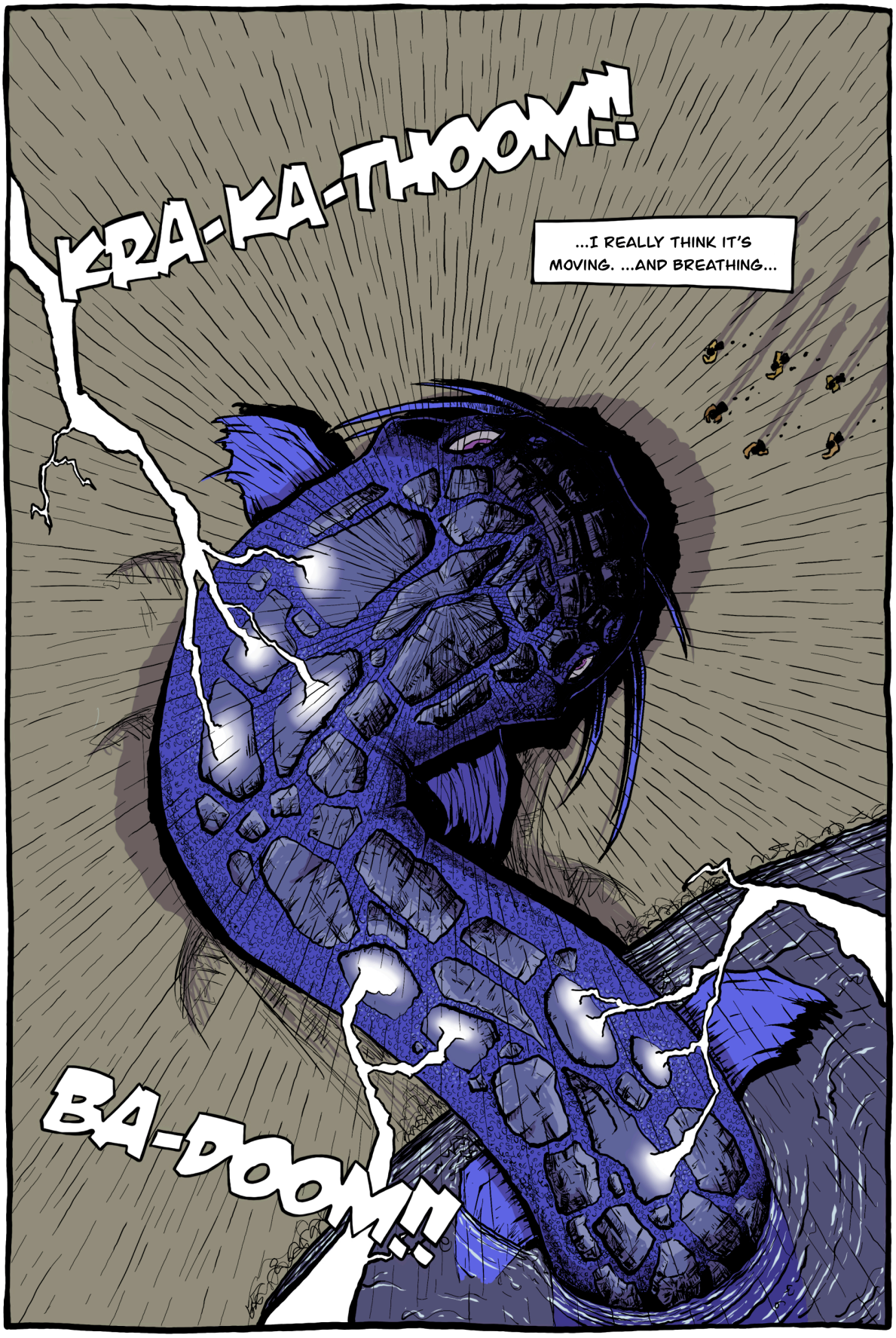
LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT THING!!
IT'S SCARFING THOSE WOLVES LIKE POPPIN' BERRIES!
FITZ AND STELLA. TRY AND SHOOT IT IF IT GETS ANY CLOSER. ADDIE, HAND OVER THE SEED. LET'S TRY AND LOSE IT IN THE CREVICES HIGHER UP.
SKREEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!

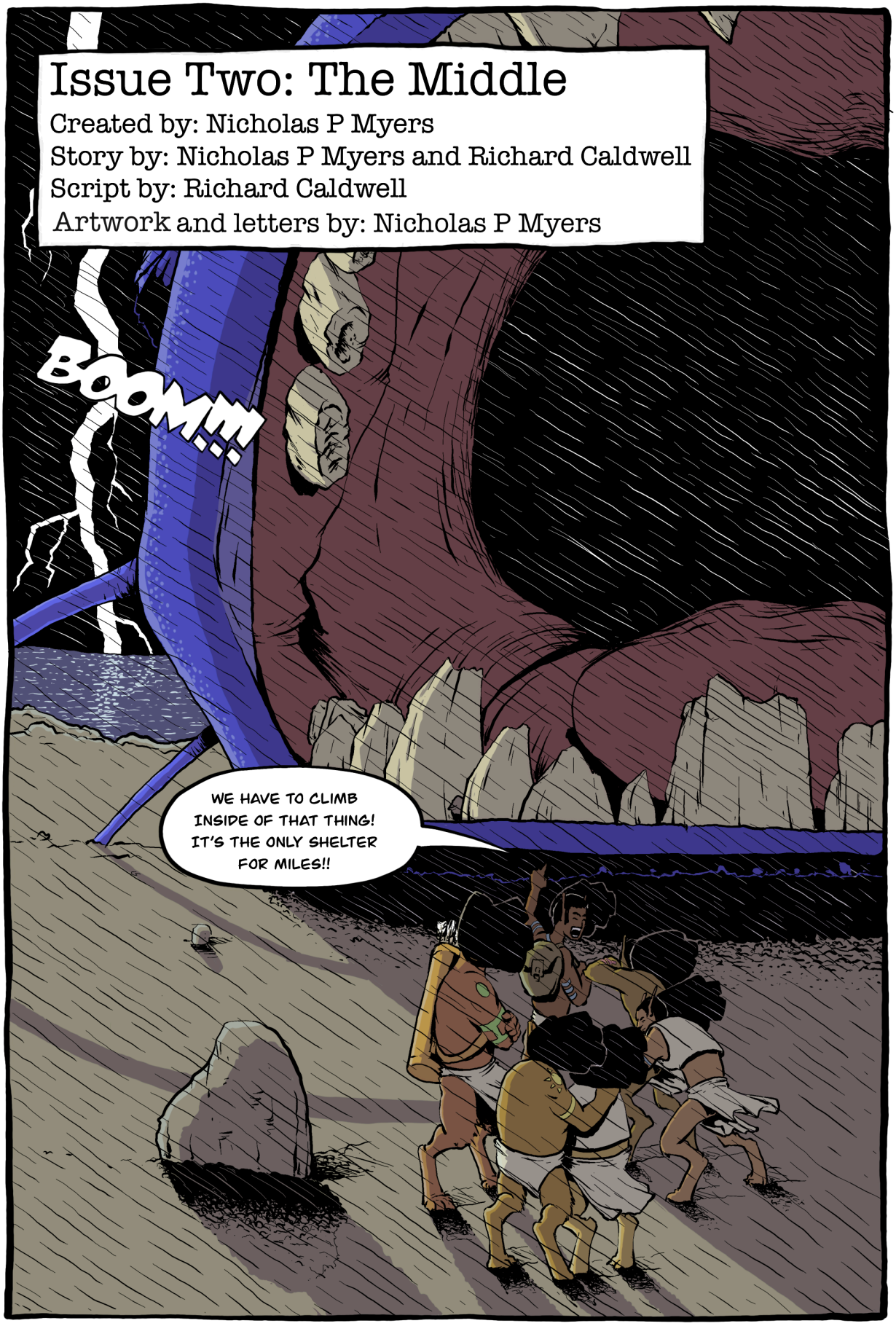
OH NO!
KEEP MOVING!
KEEP MOVING!
OH MAN!
OH MAN!
OH MAN!
OH MAN!
HOLD ON, SYLVIA!


NOOOO!!!!
JUST A LITTLE BIT MORE.
BUCK... I REALLY LIKE YOU, YOU KNOW...
STEL... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
COME HERE, YOU STUPID TURKEY!!!
SQUAWWWK
SQUAWWWK

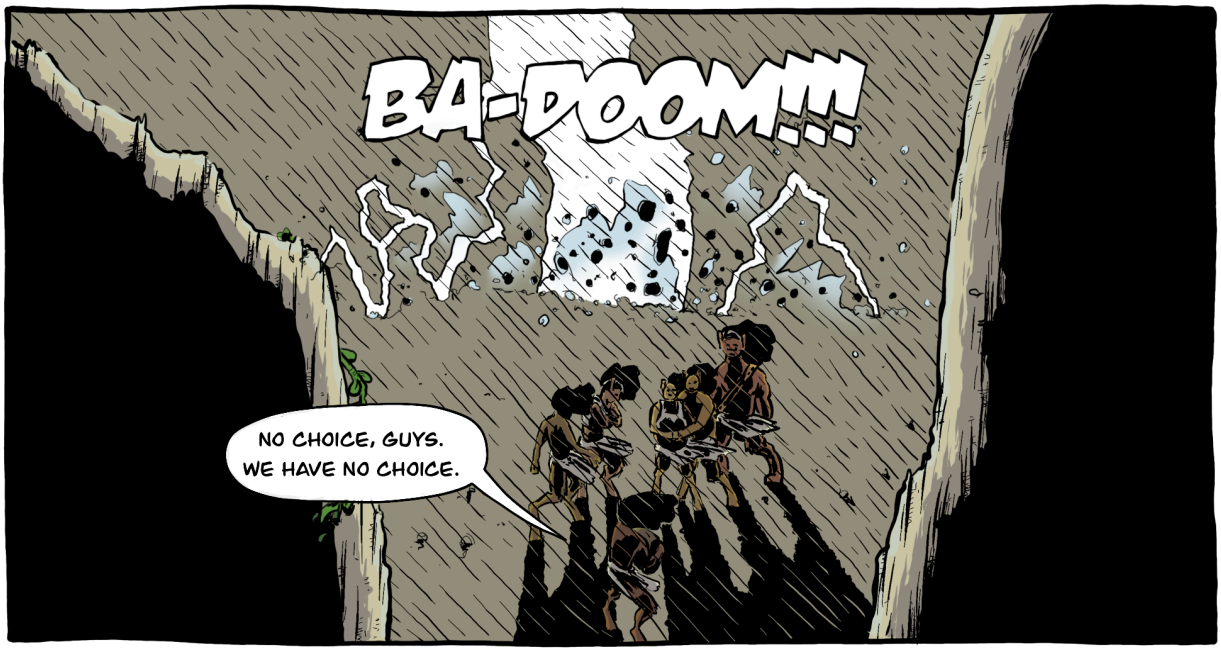
IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, LITTLE WAS SAID AMONG THE TRIBAL YOUTH, EVEN WHEN THE AIR CHANGED AND WAS FILLED WITH THE SMELL OF SALT WATER.
...FINE. WE'LL STOP HERE TONIGHT. THAT... THING HASN'T COME BACK. WE NEED TO REST. I KNOW...
HEY MAN, CAN... CAN WE TALK?
BUCK, I... I'M SORRY. I LIKED HER TOO.
MAN, STOP. SHE WAS PREGNANT, OKAY?
...
WE FOUND OUT RIGHT BEFORE WE LEFT THE TRIBE. GRANDMUM WAS THE ONLY PERSON WHO KNEW , BUT NOW...
ZOUNDS!

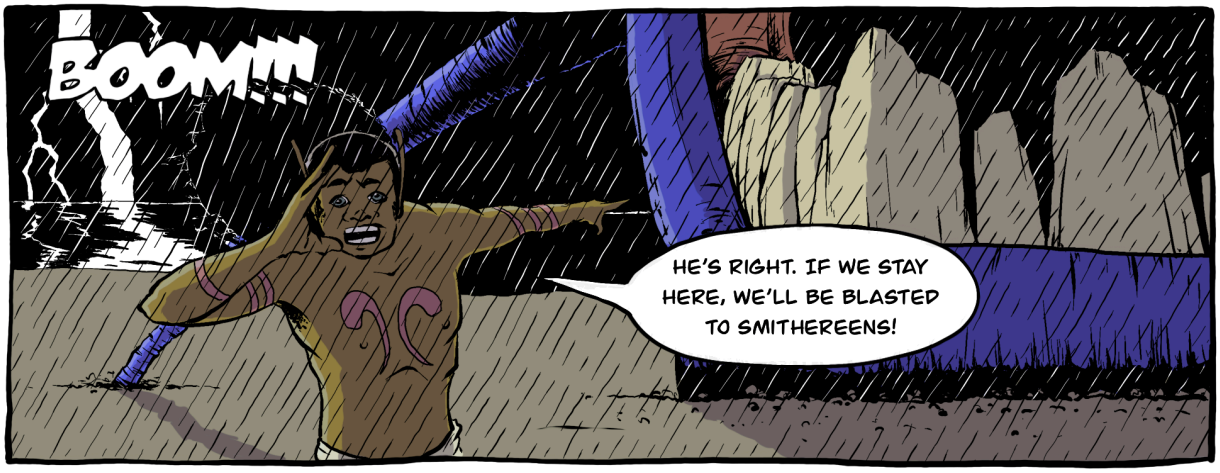

LATER THAT NIGHT, THE SKY OPENED UP AND RELEASED A STORM THIS LAND HAD RARELY SEEN BEFORE.
KA-BOOM!!!
BOOM!!!
WE NEED COVER FAST! THERE'S NOWHERE TO GO!
BOOM!!!
EVERYONE, FOLLOW ME! I THINK I SAW A BEACHED SHIPWRECK THIS WAY!
UMMM, FEARLESS LEADER? I DON'T THINK THAT'S A BOAT...


KRA-KA-THOOM!!
...I REALLY THINK IT'S MOVING. ...AND BREATHING...
BA-DOOM!!

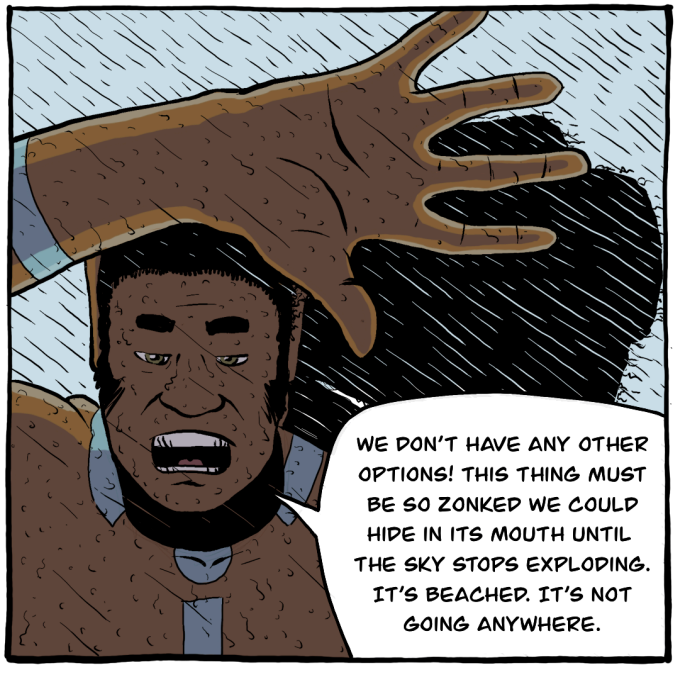

Issue Two: The Middle
Created by: Nicholas P Myers
Story by: Nicholas P Myers and Richard Caldwell
Script by: Richard Caldwell
Artwork and letters by: Nicholas P Myers
BOOM!!!
WE HAVE TO CLIMB INSIDE OF THAT THING! IT'S THE ONLY SHELTER FOR MILES!!

BRA-KA-DOOM!!!
AHHHHHHHH
MAN... TELL ME THAT THING AIN'T GETTING STONED.


BA-DOOM!!!
NO CHOICE, GUYS. WE HAVE NO CHOICE.


BOOM!!!
HE'S RIGHT. IF WE STAY HERE, WE'LL BE BLASTED TO SMITHEREENS!

ARE YOU FOR REAL?! I DON'T WANT TO GO INTO THE BELLY OF THE BEAST.


WE DON'T HAVE ANY OTHER OPTIONS! THIS THING MUST BE SO ZONKED WE COULD HIDE IN ITS MOUTH UNTIL THE SKY STOPS EXPLODING. IT'S BEACHED. IT'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

KRA-KOOM!!!
UP YOU GO, LITTLE SPROUT.

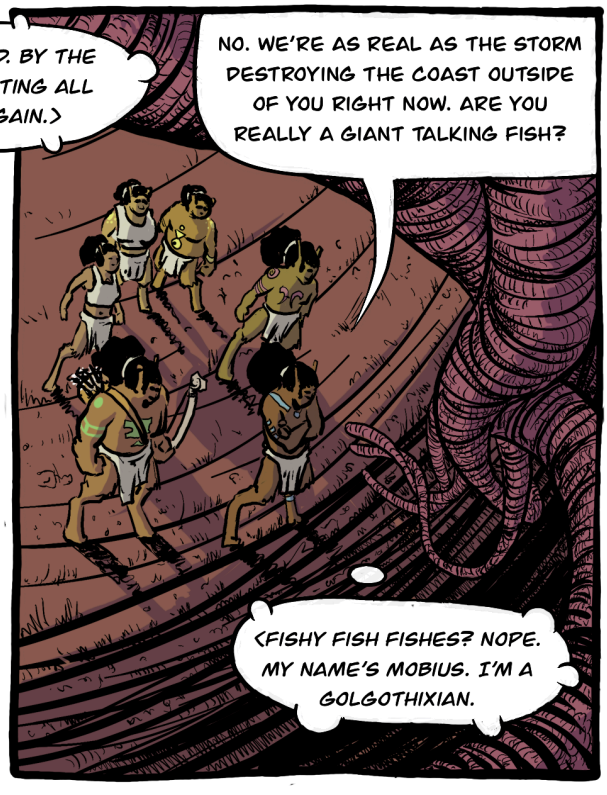
I ALWAYS KNEW I'D SOMEDAY END UP HERE. ALL THE FISH I'VE EATEN? ABSOLUTE KARMA-CHI.
FITZ? I'M MUCH TOO EXHAUSTED TO THROW ANYTHING AT YOU. REMIND ME LATER, PLEASE.

WHAT IS GOING ON???

<UMMM.... HI!>

.... HI??

DID YOU JUST SAY HI TO US?
<YEAH. I THINK I DID. BY THE BY, AM I HALLUCINATING ALL OF YOU AGAIN, AGAIN.>


NO. WE'RE AS REAL AS THE STORM DESTROYING THE COAST OUTSIDE OF YOU RIGHT NOW. ARE YOU REALLY A GIANT TALKING FISH?
<FISHY FISH FISHES? NOPE. MY NAME'S MOBIUS. I'M A GOLGOTHIXIAN.

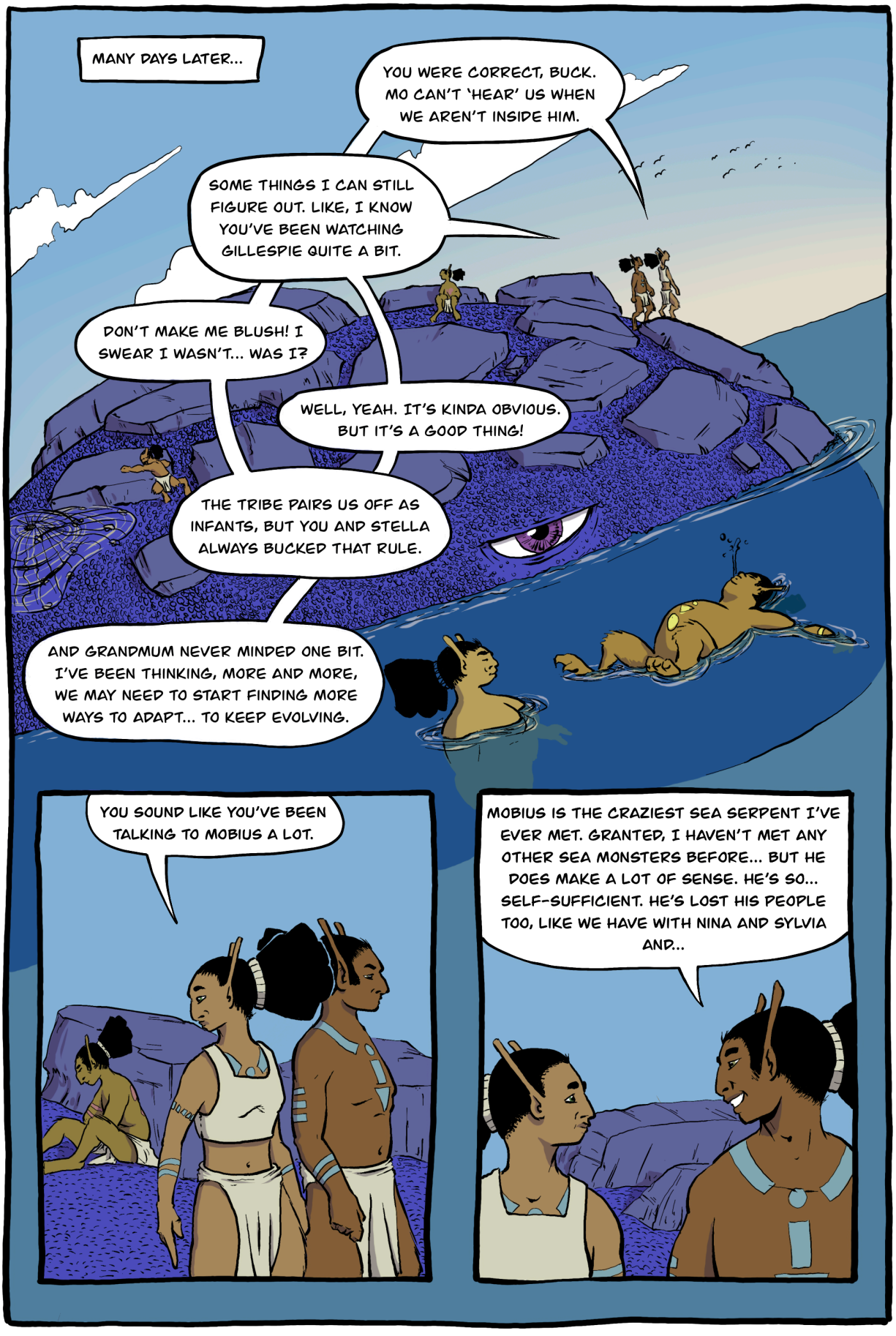
HUH.
<SO, I'M NOT DREAMING THAT THERE'S SIX BIG BUGS IN MY MOUTH RIGHT NOW? I'M SORRY. I LIKE LANDING MYSELF IN ELECTRICAL STORMS. THE SKY JOLTS MY BACK AND SUDDENLY... WORDS APPEAR IN MY HEAD THAT I NEVER KNEW BEFORE.>
HUH.
BUGS? I KNEW IT. THIS GUY'S BLAZING RIGHT NOW. AQUATIC LIFE HIGHER THAN A KITE. WHO KNEW?
SO YOU'RE SUGGESTING... THAT THE LIGHTNING, WHEN YOU CATCH IT ON THOSE BONY-PLATE GROWTHS ON YOUR BACK, IS ALTERING YOUR NATURAL STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND SO ELAVATING YOUR MENTAL POTENTIAL?
<WOWIE! THOSE ARE BIG WORDS FROM A BUG! BUT I GUESS THAT ABOUT SUMS THINGS UP PRETTY WELL INDEEDY-DO.>
HUH, AGAIN. AND I AGREE, MER. EXCELLENT SUMMATION.

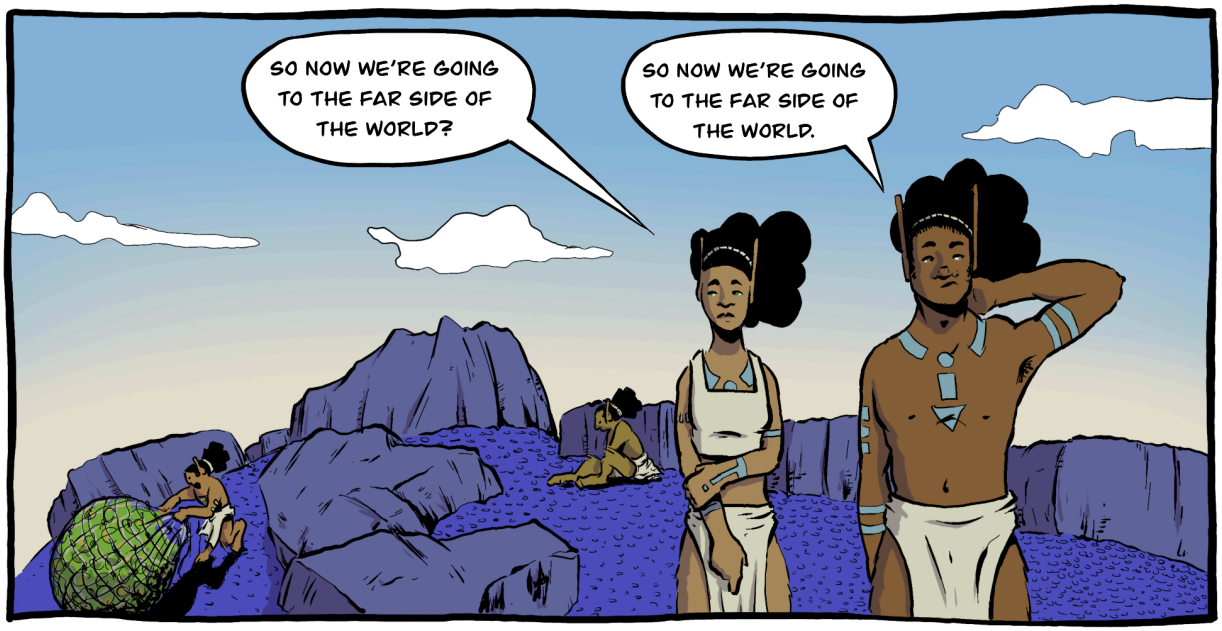
<SO WHAT'S YOUR STORY MORNING GLORY GLORIES GLORIES GLORY BUGS?>
WELL, MOBIUS... WE'RE ON A SORT OF SACRED MISSION. BUT THINGS HAVEN'T WORKED OUT SO WELL. WE... LOST SOME... FRIENDS ALONG THE WAY. WE CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN. NOT EVER. I KNOW I'M SUPPOSED TO BE LEADING US TO WHEREVER WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE HEADED, BUT I'M RUNNING OUT OF STEAM. WE ALL ARE. THAT'S OUR STORY, I GUESS.
<DUDE! I COMPLETELY, TOTALLY, WHOLEHEARTEDLY IDENTIFY. I HAD TO LEAVE MY POD A LONG TIME AGO. WHEN I HAPPENED ALONG MY FIRST SURFACE STORM I WAS BORN ANEW NEW NEW. I TRIED TO GO BACK, BUT NOBODY UNDERSTOOD WHAT I HAD GONE THROUGH. AND THEY JUST WANTED TO TALK ABOUT EATING AND SLEEPING AND MIGRATION. YOU KNOW HOW SEA SERPENTS ARE...>
<...BUT I COULD HEAR MUSIC FOR THE FIRST TIME. IN MY HEAD. I COULD IMAGINE STORIES AND PLACES AND THINGS THAT DIDN'T MAKE SENSE. I HAD NOBODY TO TALK TO ABOUT IT. SO I JUST MOVED OUT ON MY OWN. IT WAS HARD FOR THE FIRST FEW YEARS, BUT IT WAS COOL TOO TOO TOO. I GOT TO TRAVEL EVEN MORE, GOING TO PLACES MY FLOCK HAD ALWAYS BEEN SCARED OF. I REALIZED, I LEARNED, EVENTUALLY, THAT I DIDN'T REALLY NEED THE FLOCK ANYHOW HOW HOW. I CAN SWIM ON MY OWN JUST FINE.>

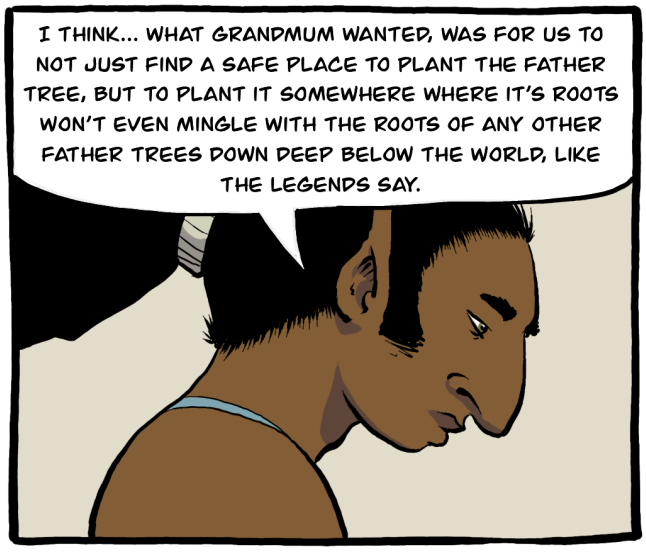
BUT DON'T YOU GET LONELY? DON'T YOU EVER GET SCARED?

<SOMETIMES, BUT WITH THE FLOCK WE JUST STAYED WITH THE FLOCK, YA KNOW? NOW I CAN MEET ENCHANTING NEW FOLKS, LIKE YOU BUGS FOR INSTANCE, AND ENGAGE IN STIRRING DIALOGUE. PRESUMING YOU'RE NOT LYING ABOUT ME DREAMING OF YOU.>

NO MOBIUS, YOU'RE NOT DREAMING US ANYMORE THAN WE'RE ALL DREAMING YOU.
<SO IF YOU WANT TO GO SOMEWHERE, I COULD TAKE YOU. I'VE BEEN EVERYWHERE, I THINK I'VE PROBABLY DREAMED SOME OF IT, BUT I KNOW I'VE BEEN AT LEAST ALMOST EVERYWHERE WHERE WHERE.>
THAT'D BE REALLY AGREEABLE, MOBIUS, BUT IS IT ALRIGHT IF WE CATCH A NAP NOW? WE'VE BEEN RUNNING ON EMPTY FOR AWHILE, AND WE SEEM TO FEEL PRETTY SAFE HERE... IN YOUR MOUTH.
WELL, YOU ALL CAN SLEEP NOW. ME AND GIL WILL KEEP WATCH. JUST IN CASE HE, UHHH... THE STORM BUILDS UP AGAIN.
<NO WORRIES, DUDE. I WON'T EAT YOU OR YOU OR YOU OR YOU OR YOU OR EVEN YOU. I'VE GONE AND WENT HERBIVORE AGES AGO GO GO.


MANY DAYS LATER...
YOU WERE CORRECT, BUCK. MO CAN'T 'HEAR' US WHEN WE AREN'T INSIDE HIM.
SOME THINGS I CAN STILL FIGURE OUT. LIKE, I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN WATCHING GILLESPIE QUITE A BIT.
DON'T MAKE ME BLUSH! I SWEAR I WASN'T... WAS I?
WELL, YEAH. IT'S KINDA OBVIOUS. BUT IT'S A GOOD THING!
THE TRIBE PAIRS US OFF AS INFANTS, BUT YOU AND STELLA ALWAYS BUCKED THAT RULE.
AND GRANDMUM NEVER MINDED ONE BIT. I'VE BEEN THINKING, MORE AND MORE, WE MAY NEED TO START FINDING MORE WAYS TO ADAPT... TO KEEP EVOLVING.
YOU SOUND LIKE YOU'VE BEEN TALKING TO MOBIUS A LOT.
MOBIUS IS THE CRAZIEST SEA SERPENT I'VE EVER MET. GRANTED, I HAVEN'T MET ANY OTHER SEA MONSTERS BEFORE... BUT HE DOES MAKE A LOT OF SENSE. HE'S SO... SELF-SUFFICIENT. HE'S LOST HIS PEOPLE TOO, LIKE WE HAVE WITH NINA AND SYLVIA AND...


SO NOW WE'RE GOING TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD?
SO NOW WE'RE GOING TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD.


I THINK... WHAT GRANDMUM WANTED, WAS FOR US TO NOT JUST FIND A SAFE PLACE TO PLANT THE FATHER TREE, BUT TO PLANT IT SOMEWHERE WHERE IT'S ROOTS WON'T EVEN MINGLE WITH THE ROOTS OF ANY OTHER FATHER TREES DOWN DEEP BELOW THE WORLD, LIKE THE LEGENDS SAY.

WELL... I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S WHAT GRANDMUM WOULD HAVE WANTED, BUT IT'S WHAT I WANT TO DO. WE HAVE TO BE THE NEW TRIBE NOW.

AND THE WEEKS HAVING FLOWN BY, AT SEA...
I CAN'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I SAW THE SKY.
AT LEAST WE HAVE THESE GLOW STONES WE SAVED FROM THE WAGON TO KEEP US FROM GOING BLIND. BUT MO SAID WE HAD TO CUT THROUGH THE OLD WORK TUNNELS UNDER THE OCEAN'S FLOOR, OR THE TRIP WOULD TAKE YEARS.
THE TRIP TO GO FAR, FAR AWAY FROM EVERYONE WE KNOW AND LOVE?
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN? I THOUGHT WE ALL TALKED THIS OVER...?
NO. YOU DECIDED ON ALL OF THIS. WE'VE ALL BEEN TOO SHAKEN SINCE THAT WINGED THING FLEW OFF WITH A THIRD OF OUR GROUP, OUR "NEW TRIBE." YOU JUST WANT TO RUN AWAY FROM OUR RESPONSIBILITY, RUN AWAY FROM EVERYTHING, JUST LIKE YOUR NEW HERO, MOBIUS HERE...
NO OFFENSE, MO.

<I TAKE OFFENSE TO THE RUNNING THING. BUT ONLY BECAUSE I HAVE NO LEGS EGGS EGG.>
GIL, I'M TRYING TO DO WHAT'S BEST FOR ALL OF US. IN FACT, WHEN WE FIND LAND... I'M TURNING THE SEED OF THE FATHER TREE OVER TO YOU.
WAIT... WHAT?!
I AM HANDING YOU FATHER TREE AND I WANT YOU TO TAKE CHARGE OF THE GROUP, AND FIND A SAFE PLACE TO RESTART OUR TRIBE, TO PLANT THE SEED... AND THE FUTURE FOR ALL OF US.
AND WHAT ABOUT YOU, MAN?
I'M GOING BACK WITH MOBIUS TO FIND THE OTHERS. STELLA'S TOO GOOD. THEY HAVE TO BE OUT THERE SOMEWHERE. I NEED THEM TO BE. I LET THEM DOWN. I HAVE TO FIND... RESOLUTION.

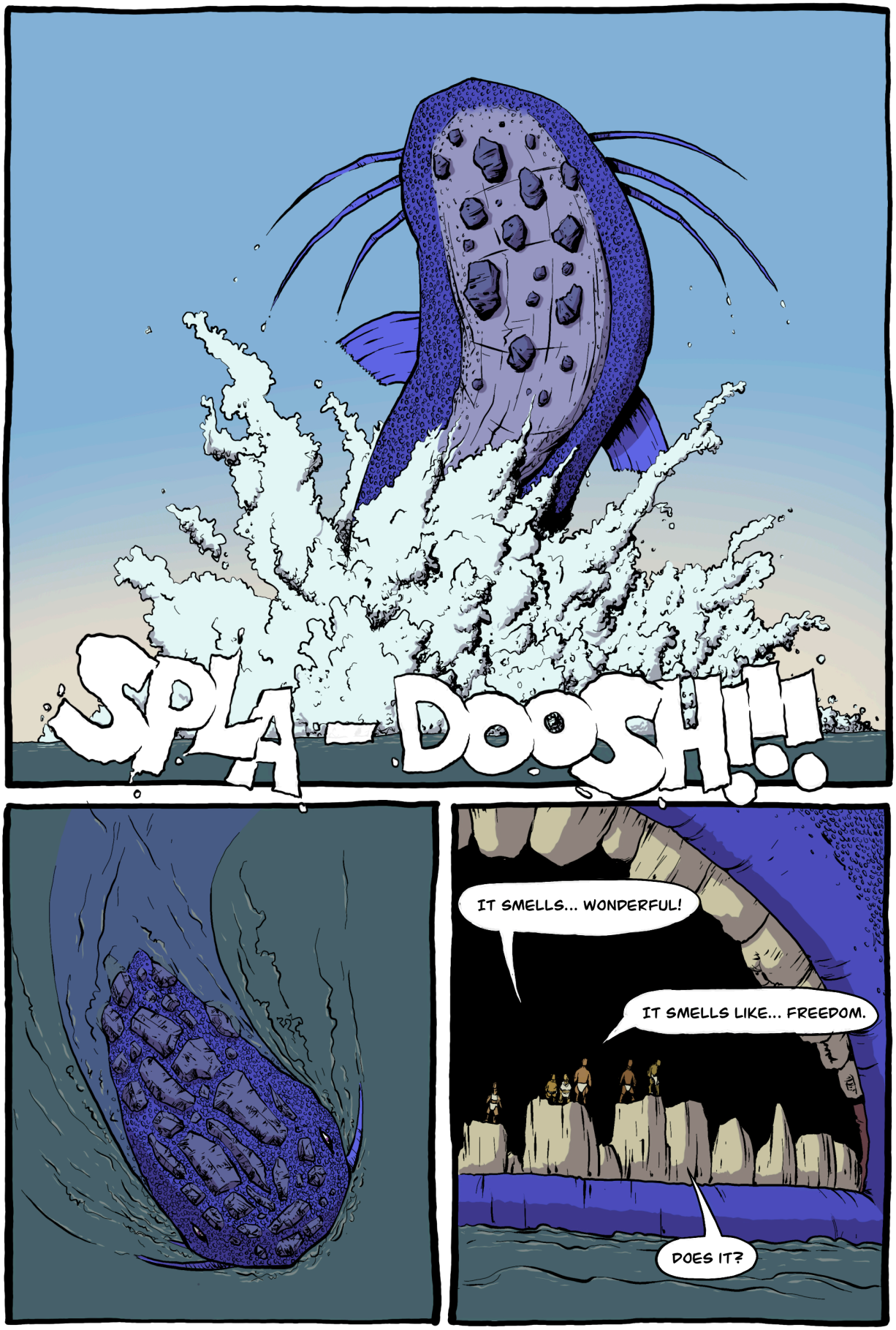
"GIL. DON'T TRY TO ARGUE WITH ME ON THIS. WHAT GRANDMUM SAID ABOUT THE WORLD DOESN'T ALWAYS APPLY. WE HAVE TO STAND ON OUR OWN NOW. YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN DOING THAT, SO THERE'S NOBODY ELSE BETTER QUALIFIED. I CAN'T LEAD US. NOT UNTIL I PULL THINGS TOGETHER."

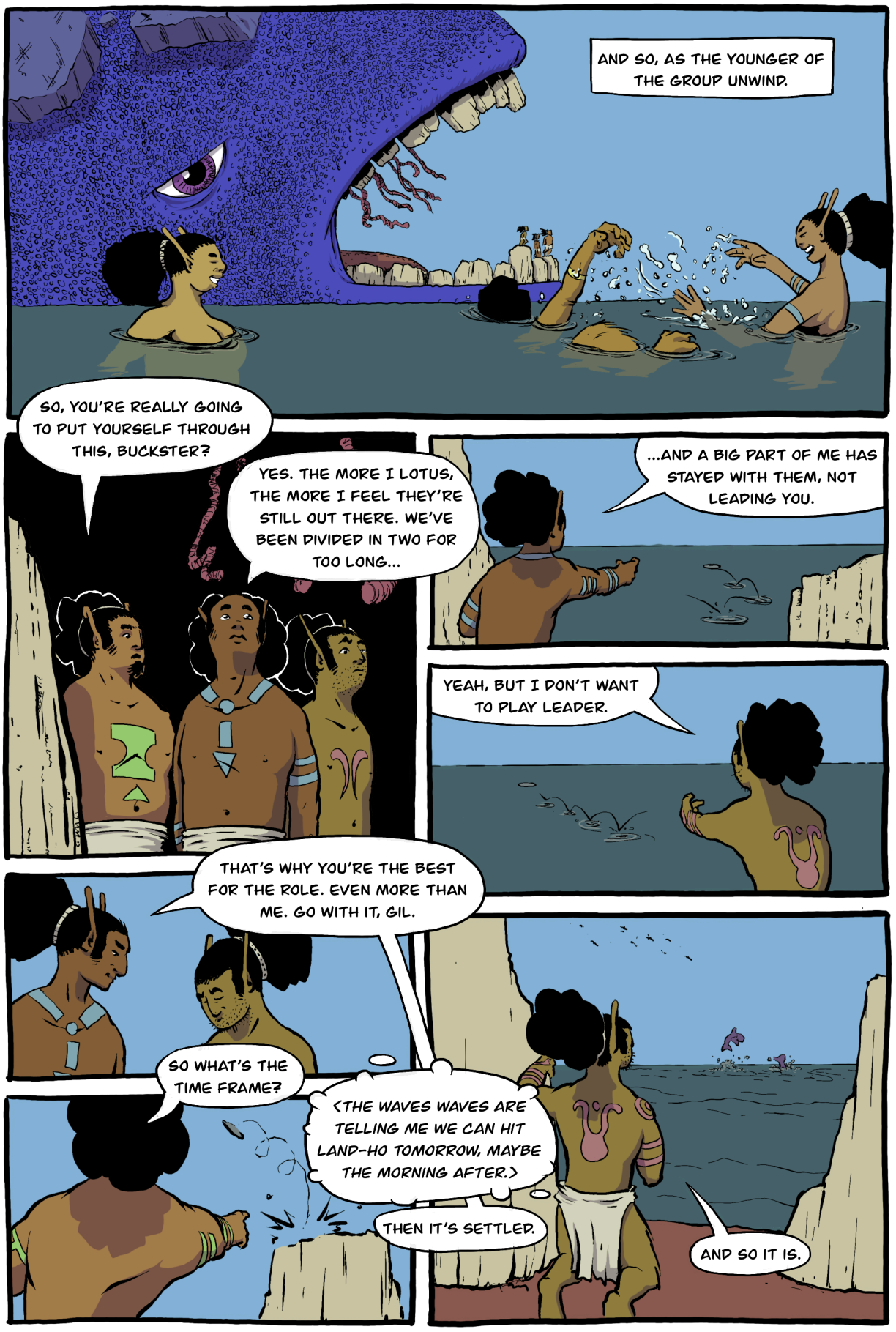
"GOLLY, I FEEL LIKE WE'RE GROWING UP SO FAST NOW.'

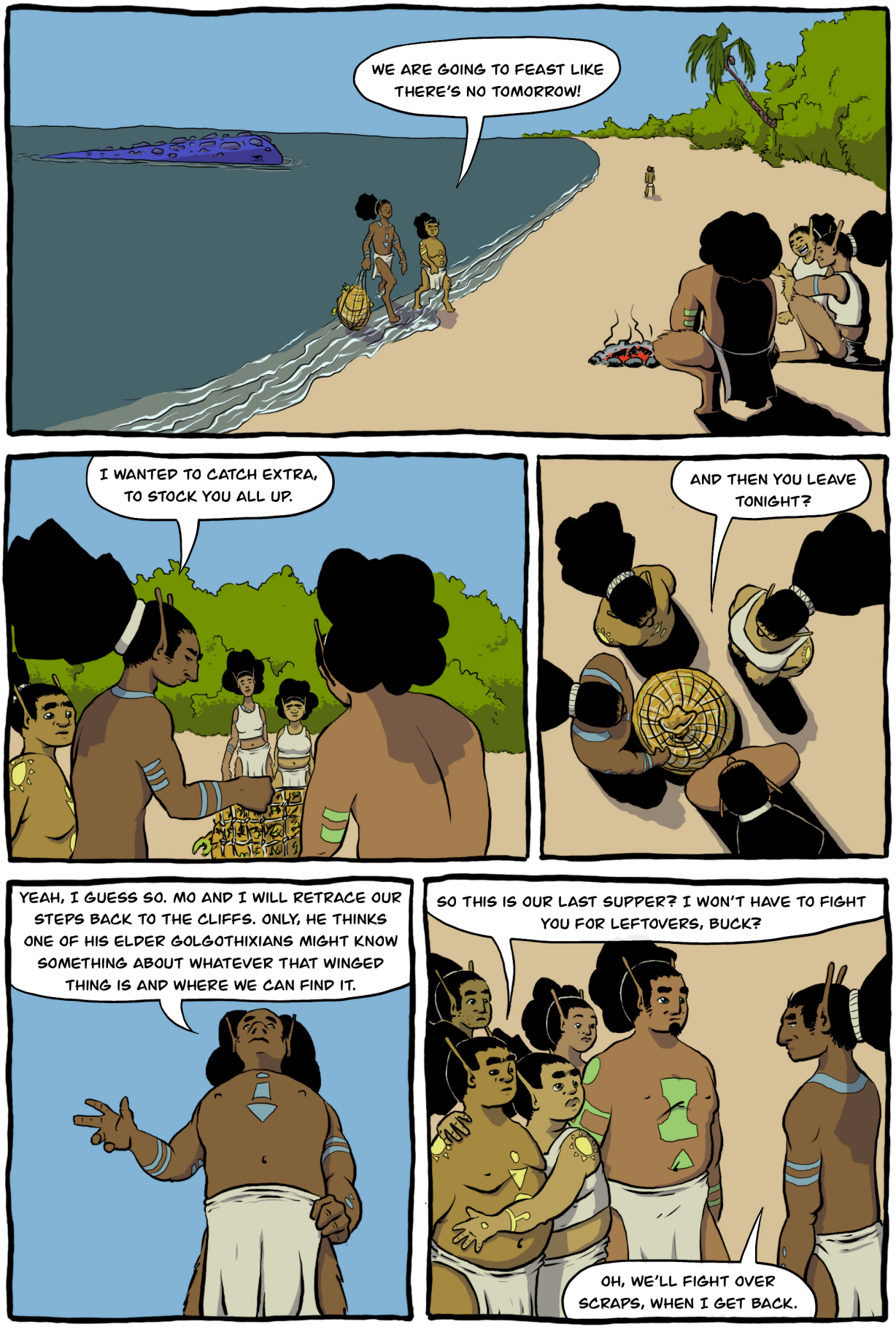
"SHUT IT, FITZ."

"YESSIR."

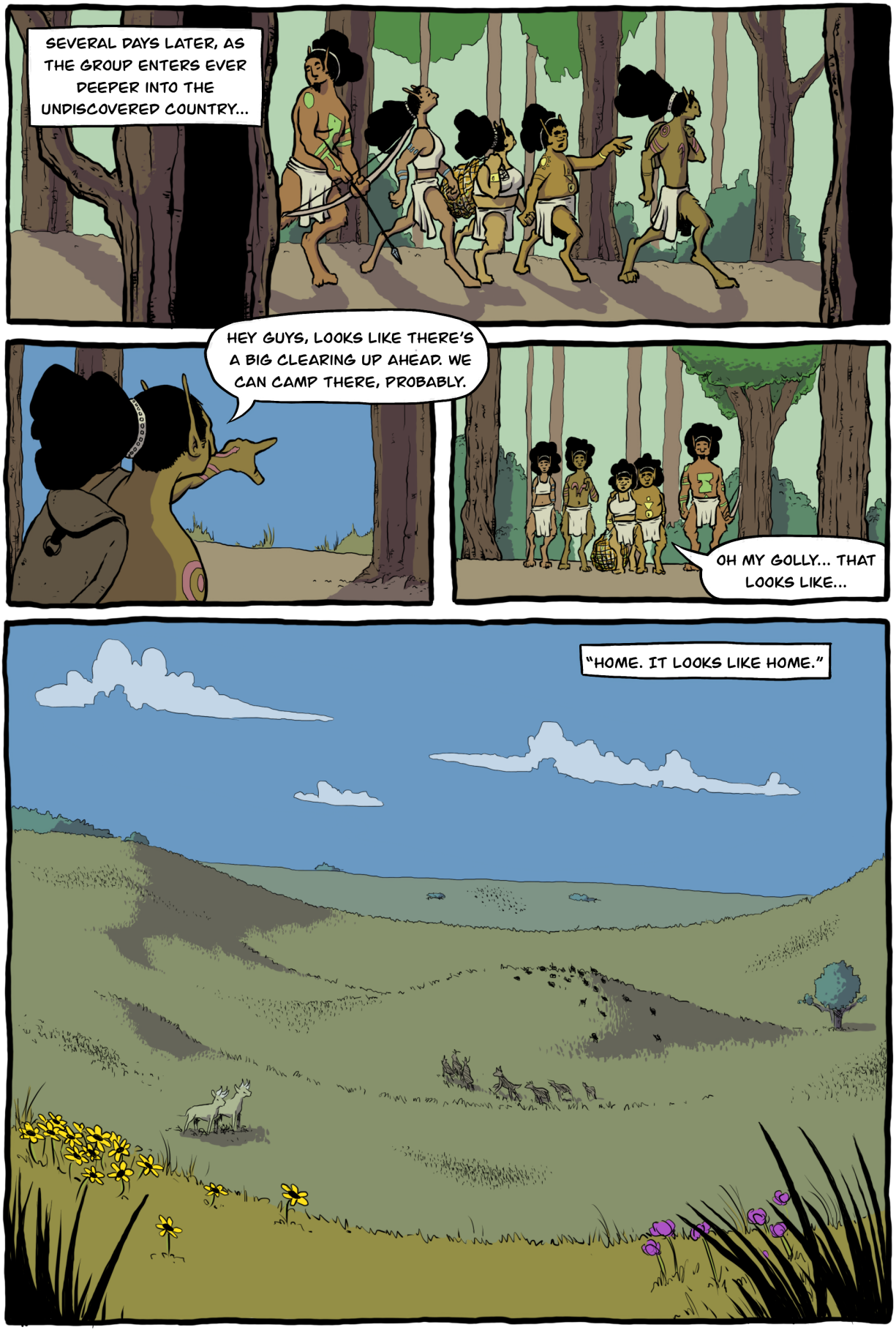
<HITTING THE SURFACE IN 5-4-3-2->


SPLA-DOOSH!!!
IT SMELLS... WONDERFUL!
IT SMELLS LIKE... FREEDOM.
DOES IT?

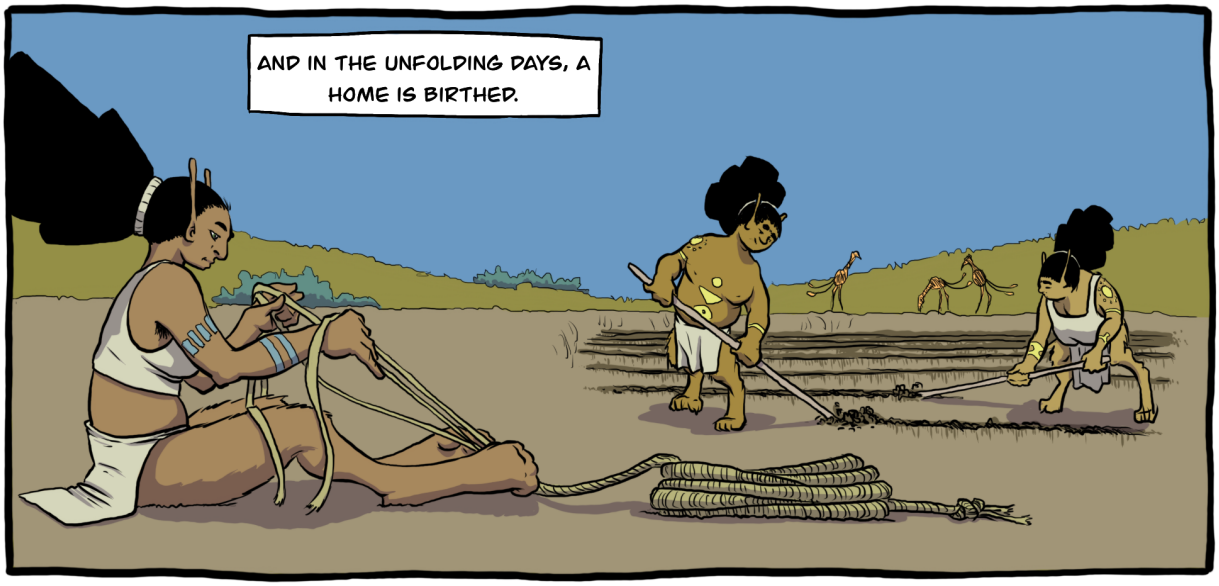

AND SO, AS THE YOUNGER OF THE GROUP UNWIND.
SO, YOU'RE REALLY GOING TO PUT YOURSELF THROUGH THIS, BUCKSTER?
YES. THE MORE I LOTUS, THE MORE I FEEL THEY'RE STILL OUT THERE. WE'VE BEEN DIVIDED IN TWO FOR TOO LONG...
...AND A BIG PART OF ME HAS STAYED WITH THEM, NOT LEADING YOU.
YEAH, BUT I DON'T WANT TO PLAY LEADER.
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE THE BEST FOR THE ROLE. EVEN MORE THAN ME. GO WITH IT, GIL.
SO WHAT'S THE TIME FRAME?
<THE WAVES WAVES ARE TELLING ME WE CAN HIT LAND-HO TOMORROW, MAYBE THE MORNING AFTER.>
THEN IT'S SETTLED.
AND SO IT IS.


WE ARE GOING TO FEAST LIKE THERE'S NO TOMORROW!
I WANTED TO CATCH EXTRA, TO STOCK YOU ALL UP.
AND THEN YOU LEAVE TONIGHT?
YEAH, I GUESS SO. MO AND I WILL RETRACE OUR STEPS BACK TO THE CLIFFS. ONLY, HE THINKS ONE OF HIS ELDER GOLGOTHIXIANS MIGHT KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT WHATEVER THAT WINGED THING IS AND WHERE WE CAN FIND IT.
SO THIS IS OUR LAST SUPPER? I WON'T HAVE TO FIGHT YOU FOR LEFTOVERS, BUCK?
OH, WE'LL FIGHT OVER SCRAPS, WHEN I GET BACK.

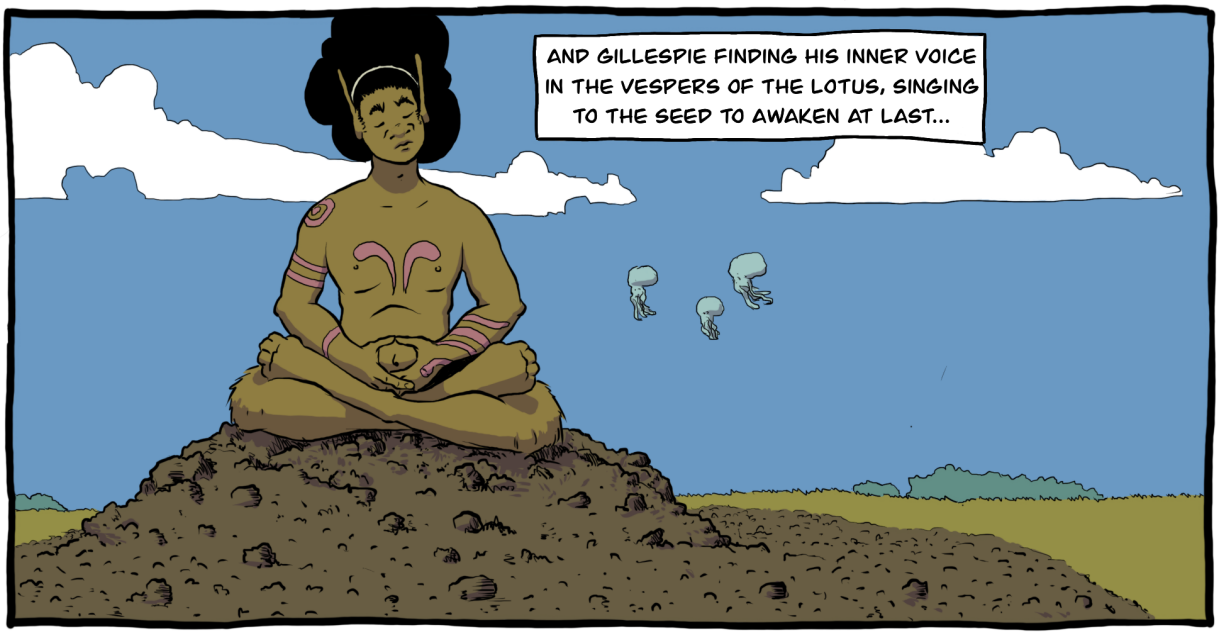
FED AND TEARFUL, BUCKMINSTER BEGINS HIS SOLO MISSION, AS OUR YOUNG HEROES PONDER THEIR OWN DIRECTION...
THE TREES THIN OUT NOT TOO FAR FROM HERE. LET'S TRY TO GET SOME DISTANCE BEFORE IT GETS DARK.
WHY CAN'T WE JUST CAMP HERE?
BECAUSE THESE FISH ARE BABIES. I SAW TRACKS IN THE SAND THAT LOOK LIKE GIANT VERSIONS OF THEIR FLIPPERS. I IMAGINE THEY BELONG TO THE EQUALLY BIG PARENTS, WHO MAY BE UPSET WITH OUR DINNER.
WHEN DID YOU BECOME MASTER OF OUT SURROUNDINGS?
HE'S RIGHT, GUYS. THESE FISH DON'T HAVE GILLS. THEY'RE HYBRIDS!
ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT. INTO THE WOODS WE GO THEN.


SEVERAL DAYS LATER, AS THE GROUP ENTERS EVER DEEPER INTO THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY...
HEY GUYS, LOOKS LIKE THERE'S A BIG CLEARING UP AHEAD. WE CAN CAMP THERE, PROBABLY.
OH MY GOLLY... THAT LOOKS LIKE...
"HOME. IT LOOKS LIKE HOME."

I GUESS, I GUESS THIS IS IT, ISN'T IT?


AND IN THE UNFOLDING DAYS, A HOME IS BIRTHED.

NONE GIVE THEMSELVES TIME TO REST, AS ALL ARE ENERGIZED BY CONQUERING THEIR LONG JOURNEY...


AND GILLESPIE FINDING HIS INNER VOICE IN THE VESPERS OF THE LOTUS, SINGING TO THE SEED TO AWAKEN AT LAST...

BUT LATE, LATE INTO THE NIGHT...
GILLESPIE!!!
WAS THAT WHAT I THINK IT WAS, OR AM I HAVING ONE OF MOBIUS'S DREAMS?
MEREDITH. MEREDITH SCREAMED.
ANTH, STAY HERE WITH ADDY AND THE SEED. FITZ AND I...
GO, GILLESPIE. GO, LEADER.

IS THAT...?
IT'S MEREDITH'S HAIR-BIND. WET WITH BLOOD.

Issue Three: The Beginning

Created by: Nicholas P. Myers
Story by: Nicholas P. Myers and Richard Caldwell
Script by: Richard Caldwell
Artwork and letters by: Nicholas P. Myers

TO BE IN THE LOTUS IS TO BE A SPOKEN WORD, LOST IN THE WIND.
TO BE ONE WITH THE LOTUS IS TO BE A GRAIN OF SAND ADRIFT DEEP IN THE DARK OCEAN, WITH CURRENTS AND UNDERTOW PULLING EVERY WHICH WAY.
I... I CAN SEE MY PARENTS?
YES, YOUNG GILLESPIE, WHILE OUR WORLD IS COMPRISED OF EARTH AND CLAY, OF AIR AND WATER AND FIRE AND THE LIVING AND THE THINGS CREATED, THE LOTUS IS MADE UP ENTIRELY OF OUR DEAD- OF THE SPIRITS OF OUR PEOPLE LOST TO TIME. YOU CAN LEARN FROM THEM MANY PONDEROUS THINGS, BUT YOU CAN ALSO BE LOST TO THEM YOURSELF.
BUT IF STELLA IS TO GUARD THE SEED OF FATHER TREE, SHE IS THE ONE TO ENTER THE LOTUS, TO PULL FATHER TREE FREE AND GUIDE HIM TO SPROUT AGAIN THROUGH OUR OLD SONGS...
YES, YOUNG GILLESPIE?
... THEN WHY AM I HERE, WHY AM I SEEING THE NIGHTMARES OF OUR PEOPLE?

THERE'S MORE BLOOD OVER HERE!
SHE'S DOWN THERE, IN THE COMPANY OF I DON'T KNOW WHAT THOSE ARE.

I HAVE AN IDEA. HELP ME PUSH THAT LOG DOWN THEIR WAY.

KRAK
CRACK!
Skitch
Thunk

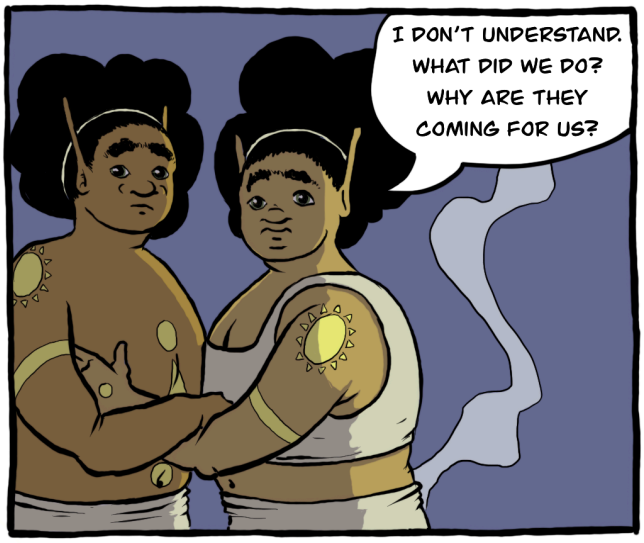
ARE YOU HURT?
THEY STABBED MY BELLY... I THINK I'M POISONED.. BUT I CAN STAND.
WE'D BETTER RUN BACK TO THE OTHERS. I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF ANY OF THIS.

MER'S HURT BAD. ADDIE, WE NEED WATER AND WRAPPING AND BALM.
OH MY GOSH!

YOU HAD US WORRIED THERE, MER.
IF ALL IT TOOK TO GET YOU TO NOTICE ME WAS A MIDNIGHT KIDNAPPING, I'D HAVE RANSOMED MYSELF YEARS AGO.
FOOL.

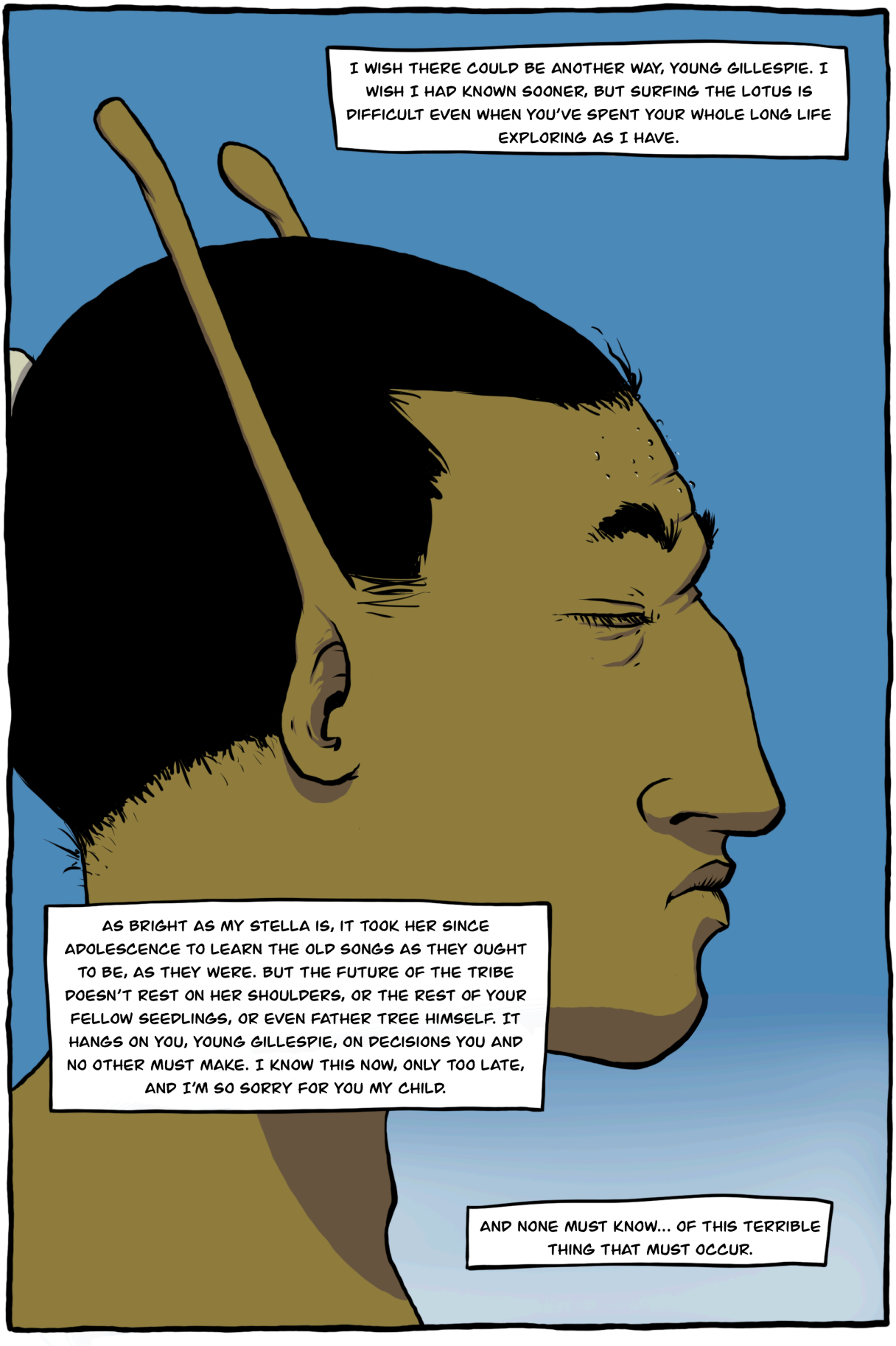
I'M SORRY GUYS, BUT THOSE THINGS ARE GOING TO COME AFTER US. WE HAVE TO STAY WHERE THE SEED IS PLANTED OR FATHER TREE WILL NEVER GROW. WE CANNOT RUN.
WHO WERE THEY?

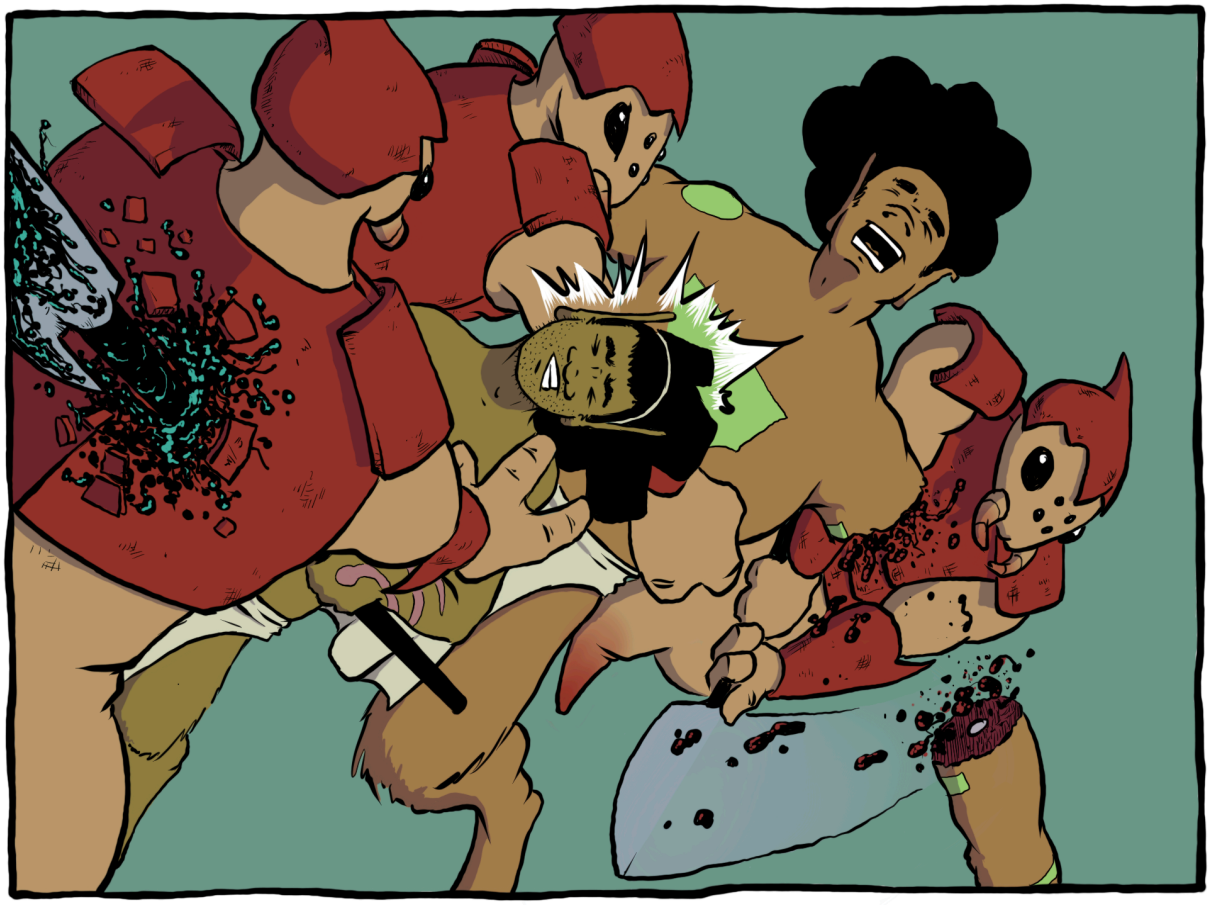
SOLDIERS. WE GOT LUCKY AND TOOK DOWN THE FOUR THAT NABBED MER. BUT ALL THEY HAD WERE WEAPONS. NO OTHER SUPPLIES MEANS THEY HAD A CAMP NEARBY. FOR ALL WE KNOW, THERE'S A WHOLE ARMY OF THOSE CREATURES COMING RIGHT HERE.


I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHAT DID WE DO? WHY ARE THEY COMING FOR US?

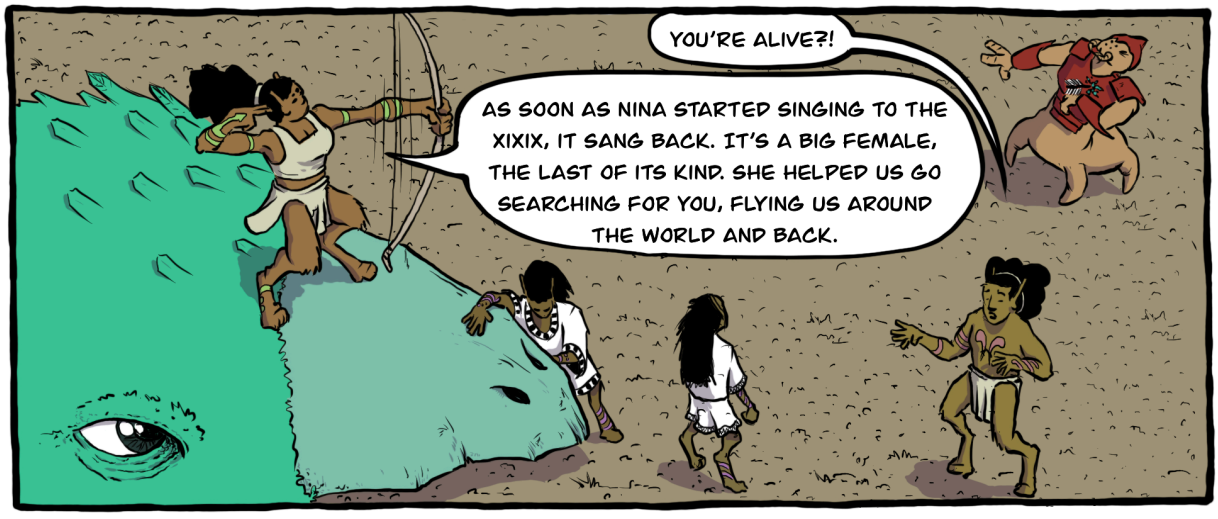
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING SO SCARY, WHATEVER THEY WERE. WE AREN'T GOING TO BE ABLE TO STOP THEM AGAIN.

OH MY GOD... HEAR THAT?! LIKE THOUSANDS OF FOOT STEPS! THEY'RE HERE!


I WISH THERE COULD BE ANOTHER WAY, YOUNG GILLESPIE. I WISH I HAD KNOWN SOONER, BUT SURFING THE LOTUS IS DIFFICULT EVEN WHEN YOU'VE SPENT YOUR WHOLE LONG LIFE EXPLORING AS I HAVE.
AS BRIGHT AS MY STELLA IS, IT TOOK HER SINCE ADOLESCENCE TO LEARN THE OLD SONGS AS THEY OUGHT TO BE, AS THEY WERE. BUT THE FUTURE OF THE TRIBE DOESN'T REST ON HER SHOULDERS, OR THE REST OF YOUR FELLOW SEEDLINGS, OR EVEN FATHER TREE HIMSELF. IT HANGS ON YOU, YOUNG GILLESPIE, ON DECISIONS YOU AND NO OTHER MUST MAKE. I KNOW THIS NOW, ONLY TOO LATE, AND I'M SO SORRY FOR YOU MY CHILD.
AND NONE MUST KNOW... OF THIS TERRIBLE THING THAT MUST OCCUR.



I DO NOT BELIEVE THIS!
SKREEEEEE!!!
BOOM!

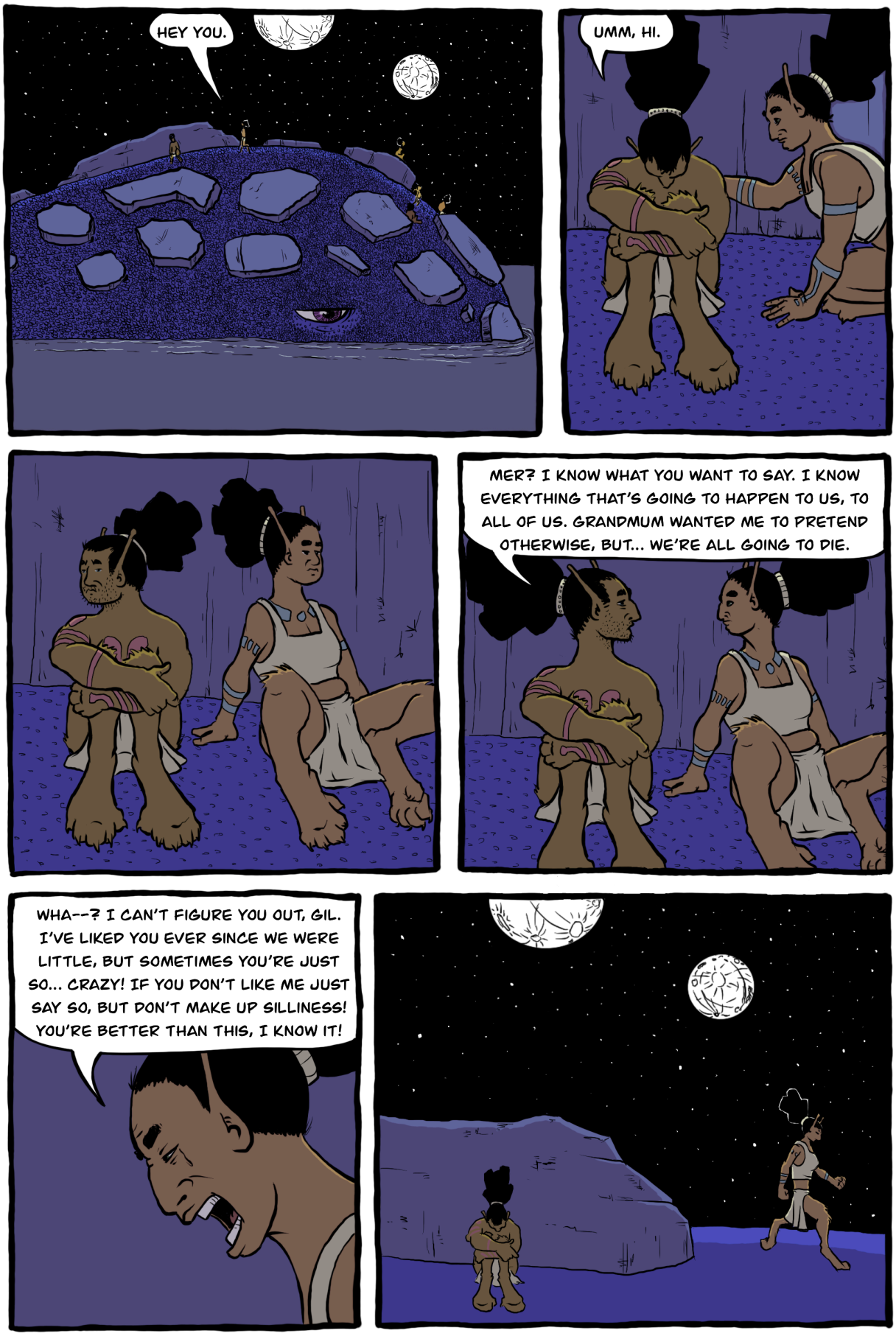

YOU'RE ALIVE?!
AS SOON AS NINA STARTED SINGING TO THE XIXIX, IT SANG BACK. IT'S A BIG FEMALE, THE LAST OF ITS KIND. SHE HELPED US GO SEARCHING FOR YOU, FLYING US AROUND THE WORLD AND BACK.

SMACK!!

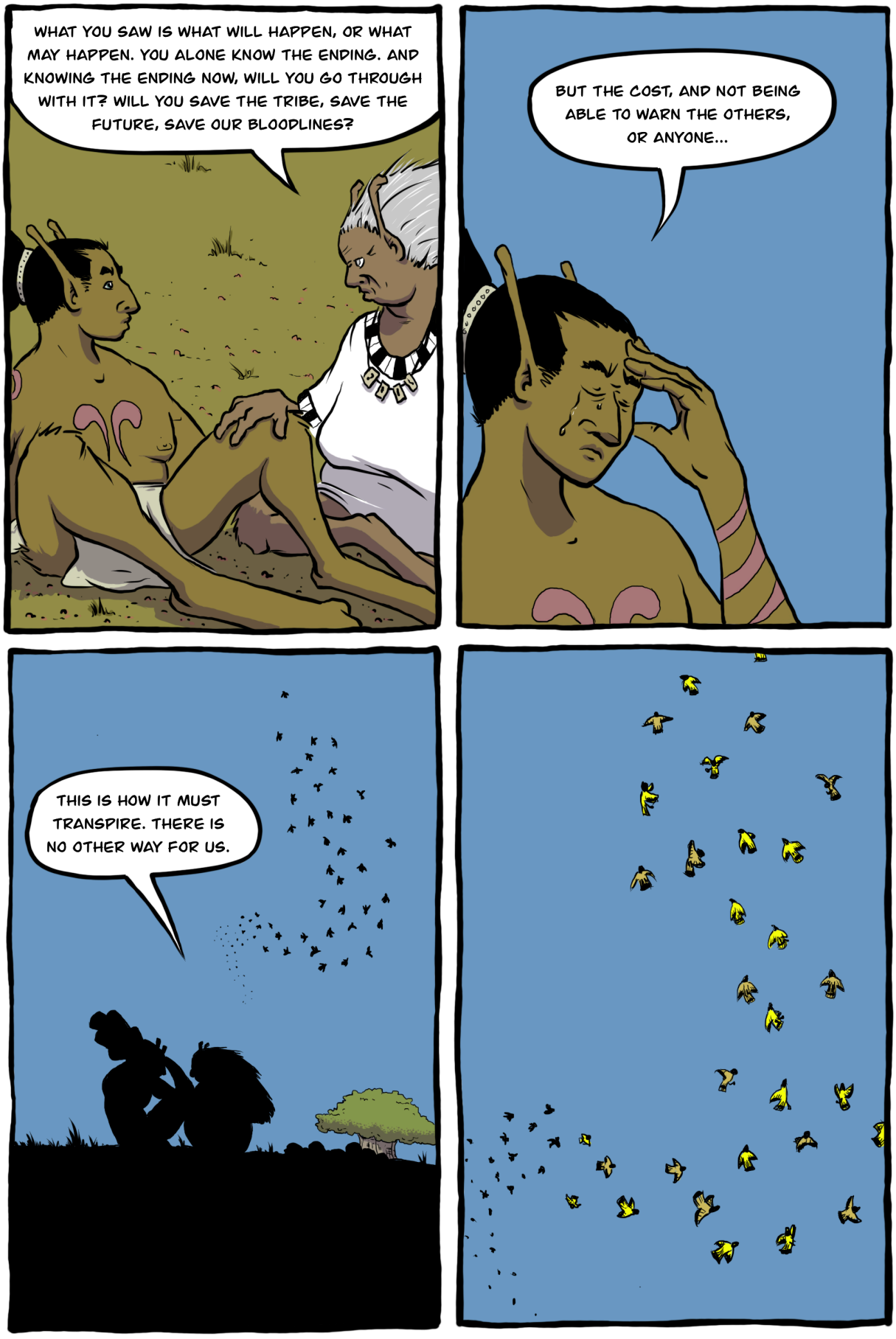
TOSS
LOOKS LIKE OUR TIMING WAS IMPECCABLE.

BABY, C'MERE!

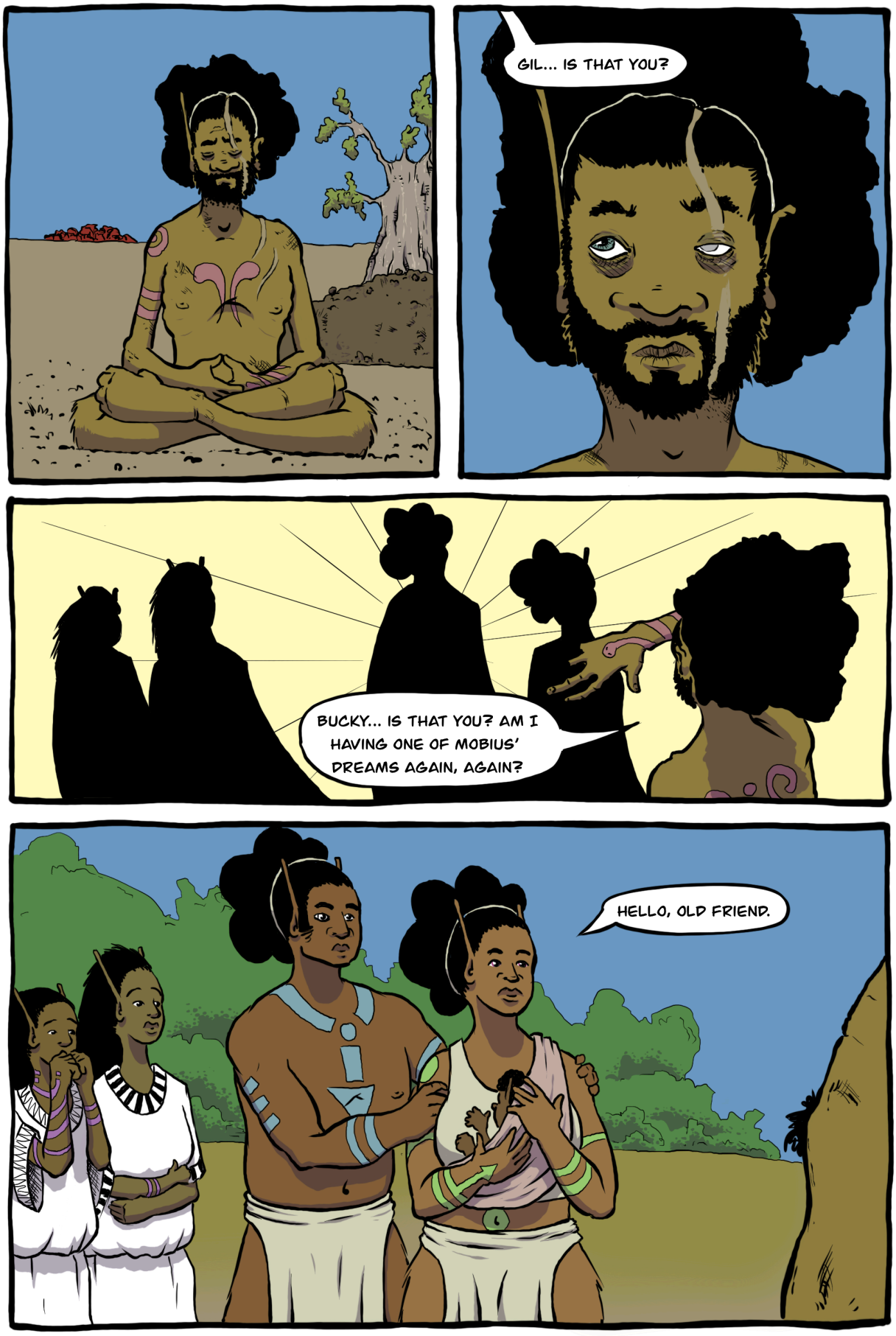
NOW THAT ALL THE BAD GUYS ARE GONE, WE CAN FINALLY REBUILD THE TRIBE.
AND I FEEL SO MUCH BETTER NOW. THANKS FOR THE NAP, GUYS! LET'S FRY SOME FISH FOR SUPPER. I'M STARVED.
WAIT... THIS ISN'T HOW IT HAPPENED... HOW THE FUTURE HAPPENED... NOT AT ALL...


HEY YOU.
UMM, HI.
MER? I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY. I KNOW EVERYTHING THAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO US, TO ALL OF US. GRANDMUM WANTED ME TO PRETEND OTHERWISE, BUT... WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE.
WHA--? I CAN'T FIGURE YOU OUT, GIL. I'VE LIKED YOU EVER SINCE WE WERE LITTLE, BUT SOMETIMES YOU'RE JUST SO... CRAZY! IF YOU DON'T LIKE ME JUST SAY SO, BUT DON'T MAKE UP SILLINESS! YOU'RE BETTER THAN THIS, I KNOW IT!

EVERYTHING... IT WAS ALL A DREAM?


WHAT YOU SAW IS WHAT WILL HAPPEN, OR WHAT MAY HAPPEN. YOU ALONE KNOW THE ENDING. AND KNOWING THE ENDING NOW, WILL YOU GO THROUGH WITH IT? WILL YOU SAVE THE TRIBE, SAVE THE FUTURE, SAVE OUR BLOODLINES?
BUT THE COST, AND NOT BEING ABLE TO WARN THE OTHERS, OR ANYONE...
THIS IS HOW IT MUST TRANSPIRE. THERE IS NO OTHER WAY FOR US.

SOB!

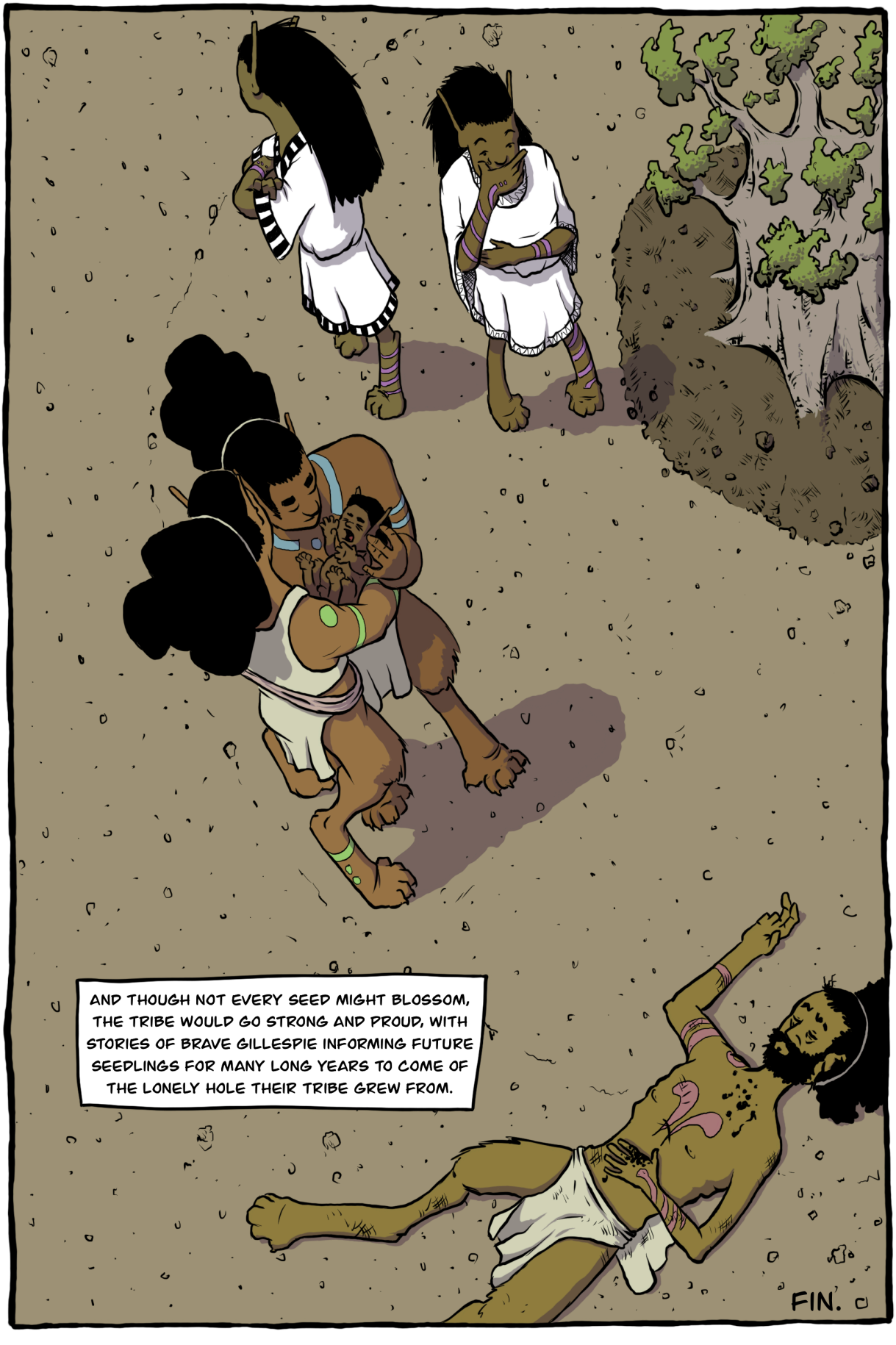

GIL... IS THAT YOU?
BUCKY... IS THAT YOU? AM I HAVING ONE OF MOBIUS' DREAMS AGAIN, AGAIN?
HELLO, OLD FRIEND.

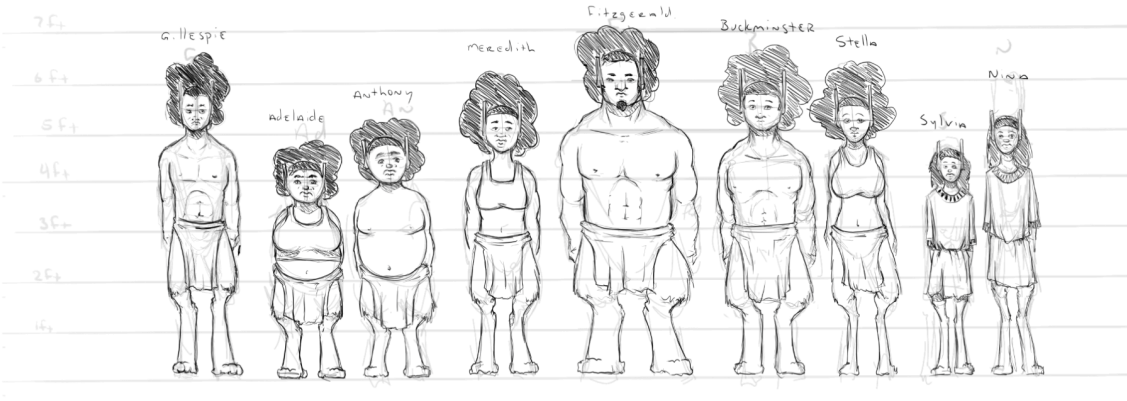
FATHER TREE... THAT'S HIM ISN'T IT? I CAN FEEL IT...
Cough cough ye... cough
IT LOOKS BEAUTIFUL, GIL. YOU DID IT! BUT... WHAT HAPPENED HERE - WHERE IS EVERYONE?
THEY'RE BURIED HERE, BY FATHER TREE. FITZ HAD HIS ARM CUT OFF AND BLED TO DEATH THAT VERY NIGHT. ANTHONY HAD HIS FACE SMASHED IN BY ONE OF THOSE MONSTERS. ADELAIDE WAS BURNED ALIVE - WE COULDN'T GET TO HER, THERE WERE SO MANY OF THEM. MEREDITH... SHE DIED FIRST, OF POISON. I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE UNTIL LATER. THEY ALL DIED THAT FIRST NIGHT, BUT IT WAS DAYS BEFORE I COULD BURY THEM HERE, BY FATHER TREE...

GIL, WHO WAS IT? WHO DID THIS?
DON'T WORRY, BUCK. I TOOK CARE OF THEM ALL. THEY KEPT COMING AND I JUST KEPT FIGHTING BACK EVEN WHEN I WAS THE ONLY ONE LEFT. AFTER A FEW DAYS, THEY ONLY CAME AT NIGHT, SO I BURIED MY FRIENDS AND BURNED THE ARMORED FREAKS. I SAT HERE ALL DAY EVERY DAY SINGING TO FATHER TREE, WAITING FOR MORE ATTACKERS TO FIGHT ALL NIGHT EVERY NIGHT. I NEVER LEFT THIS FIELD. I COULDN'T...
COUGH! COUGH! HACK! COUGH!
THEY KEPT COMING EVERY NIGHT FOR MONTHS AND MONTHS. I LOST TRACK OF TIME. I KNEW I WAS ALL FATHER TREE HAD LEFT, SO I STAYED AWAKE, I COULDN'T GO LOOKING FOR FOOD. I JUST SAT HERE IN THE LOTUS, WAITING FOR THE NEXT WAR PARTY. EVERY TIME I GOT HURT, AND SOME TIMES IT HURT REAL BAD, BUCKY, BUT I COULDN'T STOP, I COULDN'T LEAVE... I'D GET SO LONELY, BUT FATHER TREE...

Cough
Cough
Cough
Cough

WE ALL FOUND EACH OTHER. WE'VE BEEN GONE A WHOLE YEAR, MAN. BUT WE CAN GET YOU FIXED UP NOW.
NO, BUCKSTER. I THINK STAYING IN LOTUS FOR SO LONG WAS THE ONLY THING THAT KEPT ME ALIVE. NOW I'M TOO WEAK TO EAT. IF I SLEEP... I KNOW I WON'T WAKE UP. BUT I KNEW IF I HELD ON, FATHER TREE WOULD PROVIDE. AND NOW YOU'RE ALL HERE.
GILLESPIE, PLEASE DON'T GO. WE NEED YOU. YOU'RE AN UNCLE NOW.
NAW, I'VE PAID MY DUE AND PLAYED MY PART. BUT HEY, WHAT HAPPENED TO MOBIUS AND XIXIX?
MOBIUS LED US TO THE XIXIX AND THE TWO FELL MADLY IN LOVE WITH EACH OTHER. BUT WAIT – HOW DID YOU KNOW THE BIRD'S NAME?
TOLD YA, I WAS IN LOTUS FOR A LONG TIME, SINCE BEFORE WE EVEN LEFT THE TRIBE. I KNEW IT ALL. GRANDMUM SAID YOU CANNOT FIGHT THE FATES... BUT YOU CAN BE READY FOR THEM. I TRIED, ANYWAY...


AND THOUGH NOT EVERY SEED MIGHT BLOSSOM, THE TRIBE WOULD GO STRONG AND PROUD, WITH STORIES OF BRAVE GILLESPIE INFORMING FUTURE SEEDLINGS FOR MANY LONG YEARS TO COME OF THE LONELY HOLE THEIR TRIBE GREW FROM.
FIN.



To understand where the seedlings came from you need to dig something of the unspoken pact that exists between Nick and me. I've known Nick Myers since early 2008. I had been writing for a now defunct webzine for over a year, reviewing comics and films and reporting on the odd story, and had decided to expand into a regular column around the same time that Nick also started writing a column for us. So as we were first getting to know each other there was a thin veil of competition, as ours were the only columns at the time for the website in question. Unfortunately, his schedule proved too demanding in those days to keep his piece going, eyes bigger than his stomach as they say, and had to bow out. But we stayed in touch.

When he later co-founded ANA Comics I was there on the media side, happy to give a pal a plug wherever possible. When his ANA team began putting together their first big anthology and needed additional material they literally dared me to write an all-ages/family-friendly story for the book, pairing me up with the great artist Andy Dawe-Collins. I usually shied away from chances to hop the fence and actually work in comics, seeing it as a conflict of interest. Exceptions for me have only and always been when friends ask me to pitch in. So we did the story, hoping to continue it as a webcomic hosted at the ANA site and edited by Nick, but Andy was getting more work acting in indie films- his true passion- so we had to let the continuation of the project drop. But Nick and I stayed in contact anyway, exchanging email more and more often, finding in each other a very sincere kindred spirit.

I bought a copy of his massive Oasis graphic novel online and read and reviewed it. I did the same with his Harijan mini-series, which I still rank among my all-time favorite mini-series ever, and I later was invited to write the introduction for the trade collection. I was a great fan of his The Precarious Adventures of Newt Von Brisby webcomic, for the year or so it ran. So much imagination...it was all deliriously good. And I saw how they were connected to one another. I think pointing out that realization to him was what really made it click in his mind that I was honestly studying his output. I was a real fan. I've interviewed Nick twice over the years, once for the old ANA blog, and more recently for my own website the Lottery Party. Both occasions offered me the chance to really pick his brain, as even through our lengthy email chains, barrage of text messages and the rare long-distance phone call, he can be pretty reserved about himself. Just like me.

Nick and I are very different people in many, many ways. He has a wife and kids, a college education, a house and a decent day job. I have none of those things. I have nicotine-stained fingers and seem to live off of coffee and/or bourbon. He has pretty much remained in the mid-west for much of his life, whereas I have been all over the

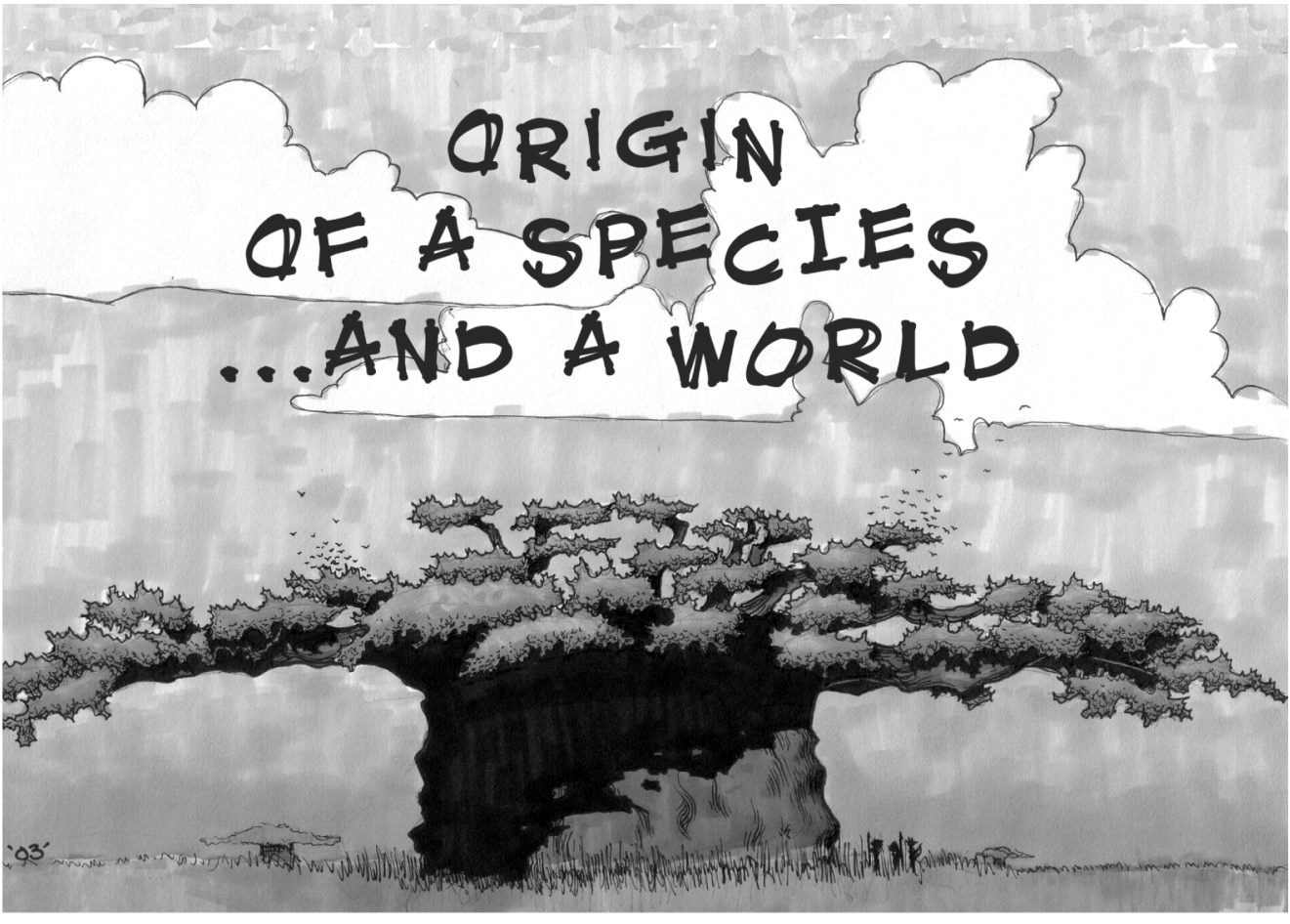
country, including some hours physically lost in the ocean during a bad acid trip years ago. But despite these meanderings on differing sides of the metaphorical tracks, we realized 2 or 3 years back that our brains run in almost identical ways. We both understand that depression is not something that can be conquered, but something that must be adapted to, incorporated into the motherboard. We get angry, we do stupid things, we hurt people. And more often than any of that, we daydream. We want desperately to make the world a better place, with our respectively meager resources, and we are not too manly to say such a thing aloud. In spite of our shared flaws, we both recognize the need for a return of ethics and morals and virtues on the world stage. We both want to be Jimmy Stewart. And for all intents and purposes, large aspects of ourselves may as well still be stuck back in puberty, playing the eternal role of proverbial fanboy with our eyes wide open by the inspirational gleaming of the hypercool things that can sneak into our culture. Things like Jim Henson's films, and comics like the Maxx, and Larry Marder's Beanworld, and Wendy and Richard Pini's ElfQuest. Music that not only includes a guitar, but where the guitar plays more than three chords. Such are the goofy things we talk about when we're not gossiping about the comic book industry. So it was inevitable that some form of culmination would hit.

Early February of last year (2012), Nick sent me a proposal, asking if I'd be interested in writing a new story for him to illustrate. We had joked about collaborating before, but we both stay awfully busy with surviving the flow and ebb of the real world and chasing our individual fantasies. But of course, I accepted, site unseen as by that point we knew each other well enough to have some inkling of what the other wanted to say in such a shared story. So, he sent me maybe a five-hundred or so word synopsis, mostly of certain creatures, certain settings, that he wanted to incorporate. I fired back with a cast, nine youths with names and brief descriptions. And so we fleshed out the basic outline for the three issues of the seedlings. While I once ghost-scripted a twenty-five page comic overnight, this project honestly took me a couple of months to script out, with the three twenty-three page chapters slowly coming together like a...well, and Nick has been achingly researching his visuals, experimenting with new techniques, really pushing his style...and...

To reveal the process would reveal the ultimate design, and where's the fun in that? Seeds grow, so let's just leave it there until the cops are called. Growth is impossible without the starting point of an origin, and there is a grand unity in that, like the growth one achieves from finishing a good book. Not every story has something of value to say, especially in these modern days of penny-pinchery and ulterior motives to sell the company line or whatever hidden agenda. At least for Nick and me, we do acknowledge that we were selfishly making something in these pages that might well appeal only to ourselves (and Nick's daughters, as he is raising them right). And we are having fun, even if nobody else finds any reason to get it. Our goal from day one has been to make the seedlings come alive and share their story, not to be the next Stan and Jack. This is the sort of comic, the sort of story, that we are seeing less and less of in the world; the very sort we insist on keeping alive.

We have to, because the seedlings is non-fiction.

rhc
29.07.13
Somewhere in Kentucky.

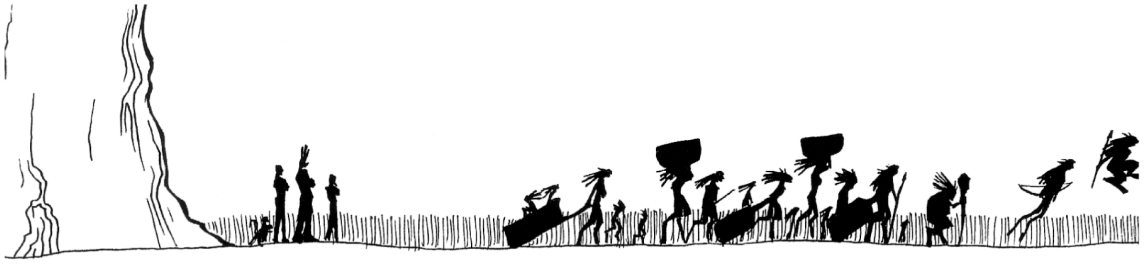


I first discoved the grasslands, and the people and animals that inhabited it, while I was working on the story of Patrick, which I later collected in to *Oasis: Omnibus.* The "People of the Trees," along with their surroundings, introduced themselves to me and become more complex and interesting than I intended... and then they were gone, refusing to take part in the struggles Patrick was destined to be a part of. I moved on from *Oasis* to work on *Harijan* and then *The Precarious Adventures of Newton Von Brisby*, leaving the people on a shelf

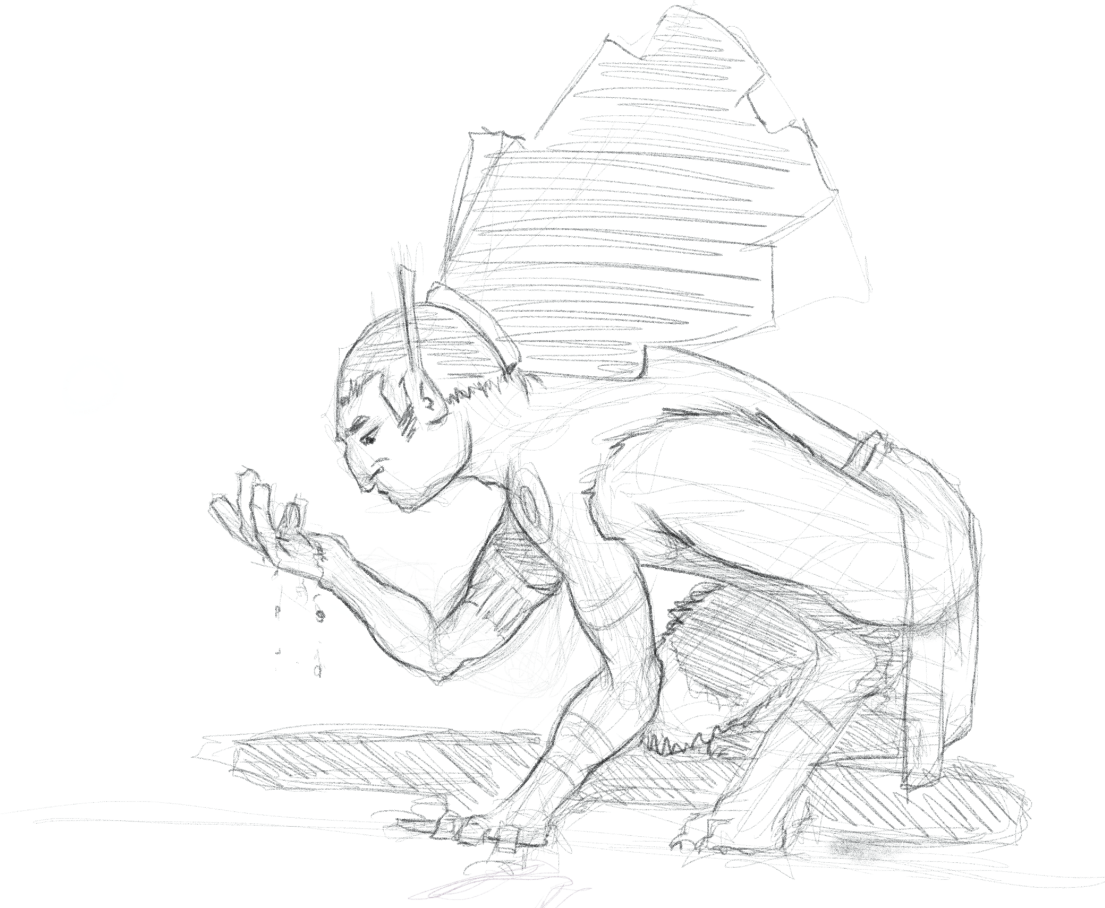
They were a mysterious and proud people. They lived intensely in the physical realm, never once losing contact with the "Spirit Word." or the "Grey." which exists more as a realm between worlds than just a simple afterlife. In my mind, they were a mix of Aborginal, African and Native American people. Yet they were none of these.

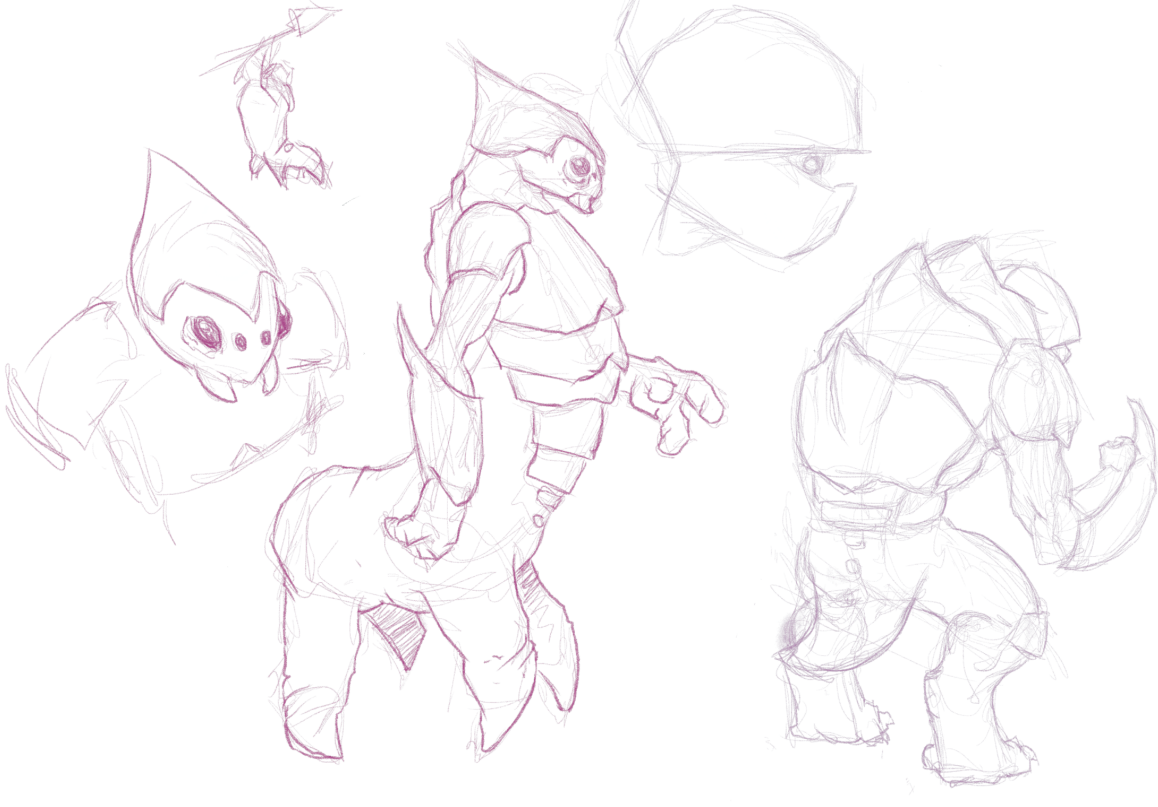
The story I wanted to tell was about these magnificent people with a brief look into their hearts and who they were and why.... and Richard helped me do that. He took my idea, fleshed it out, breathed into it and gave it life and we both saw that "This was good."

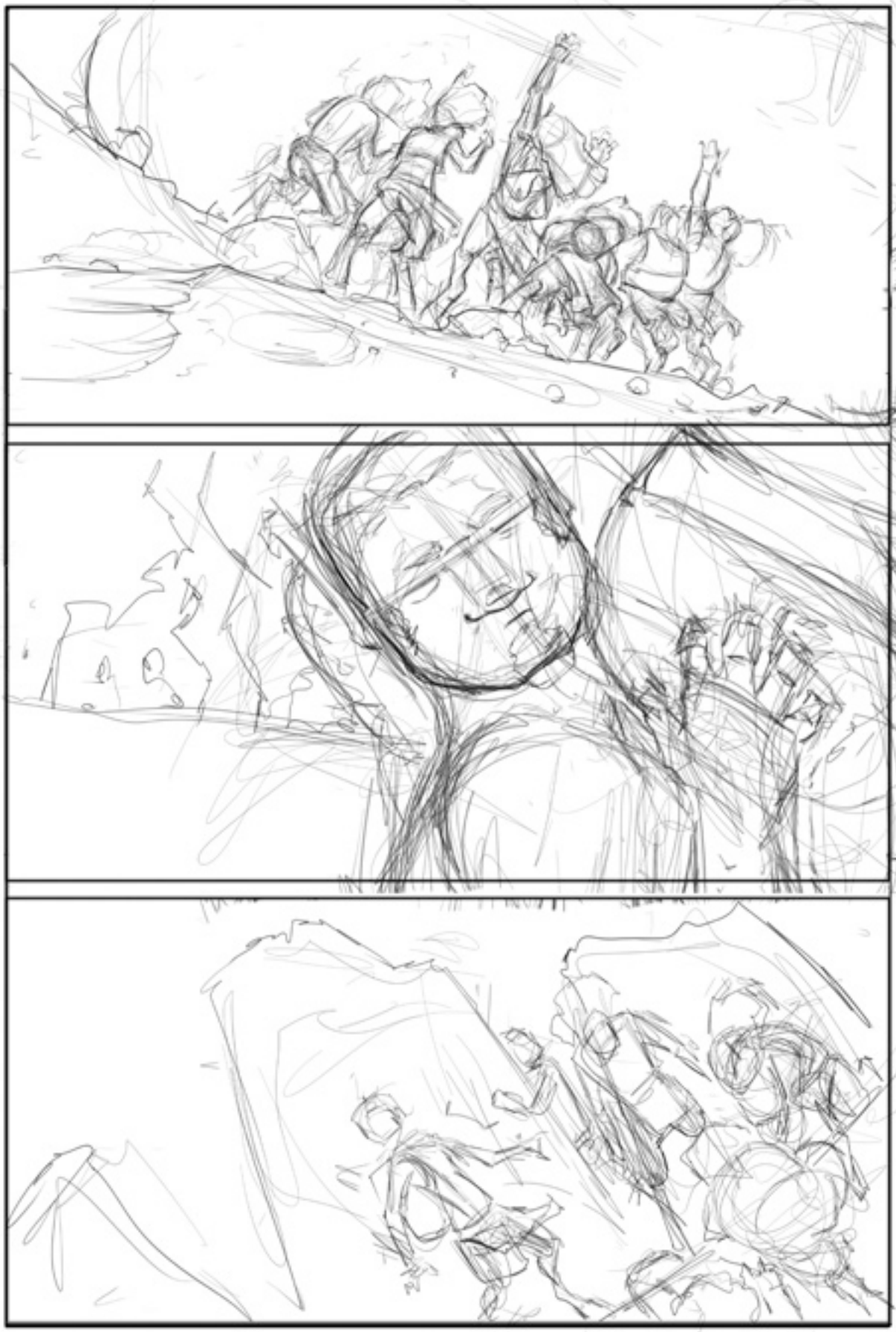
Nicholas P. Myers
Caledonia, MI
08-04-13

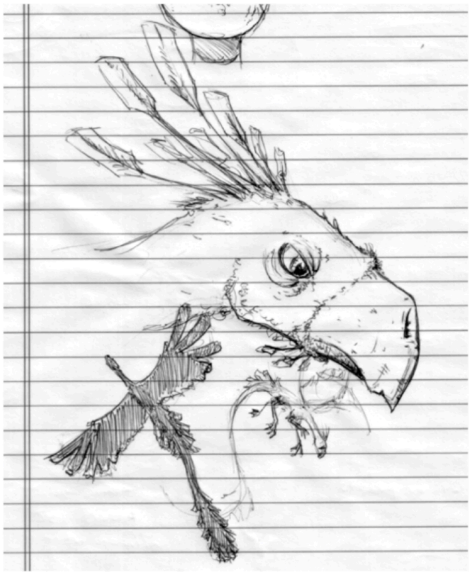


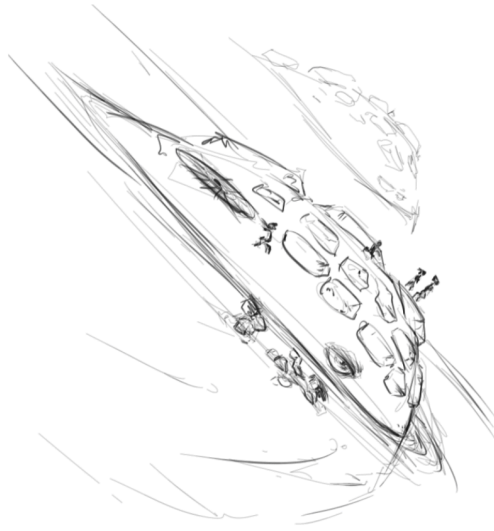
What exactly do you think you are doing, little one?
Ummm, hello.





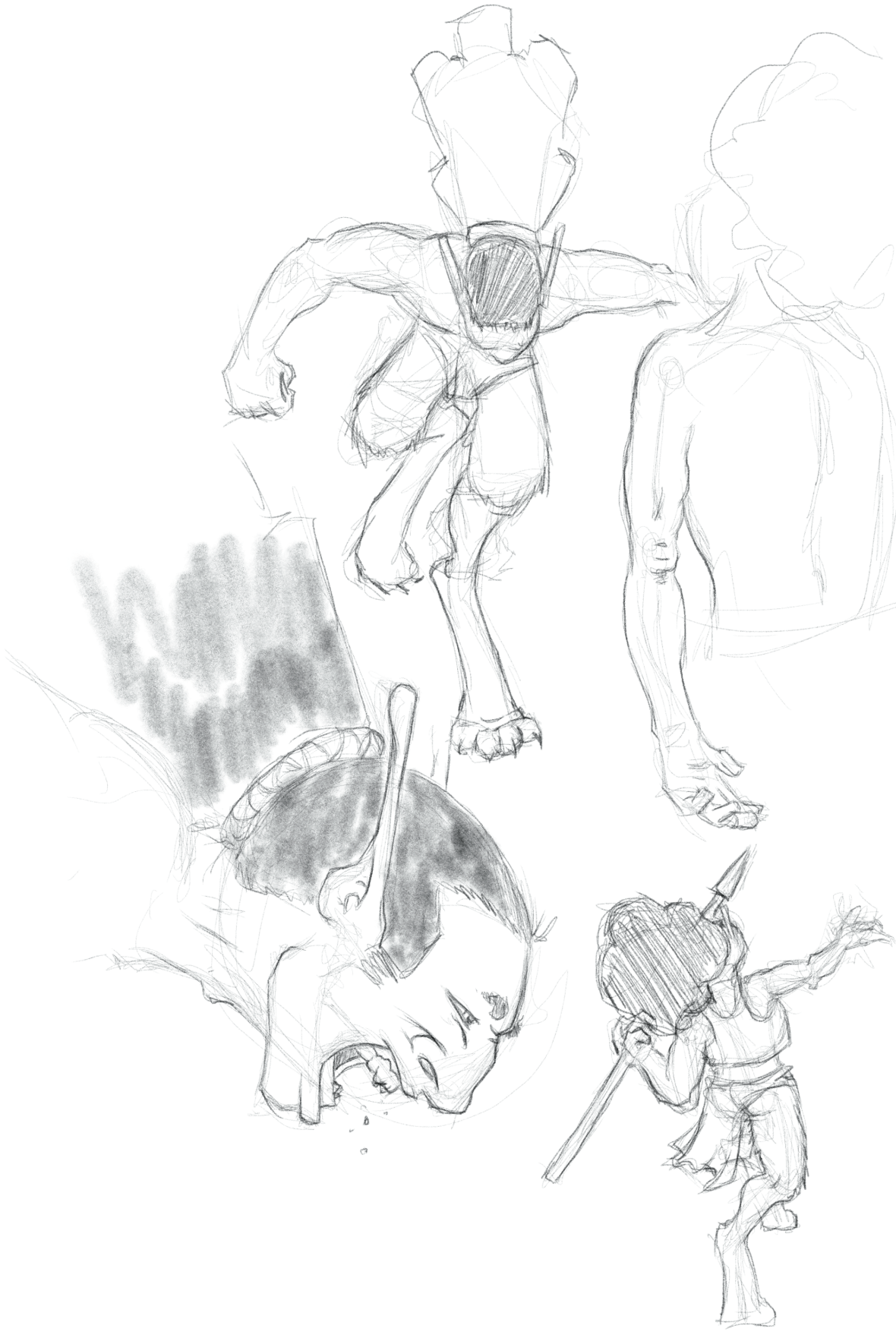


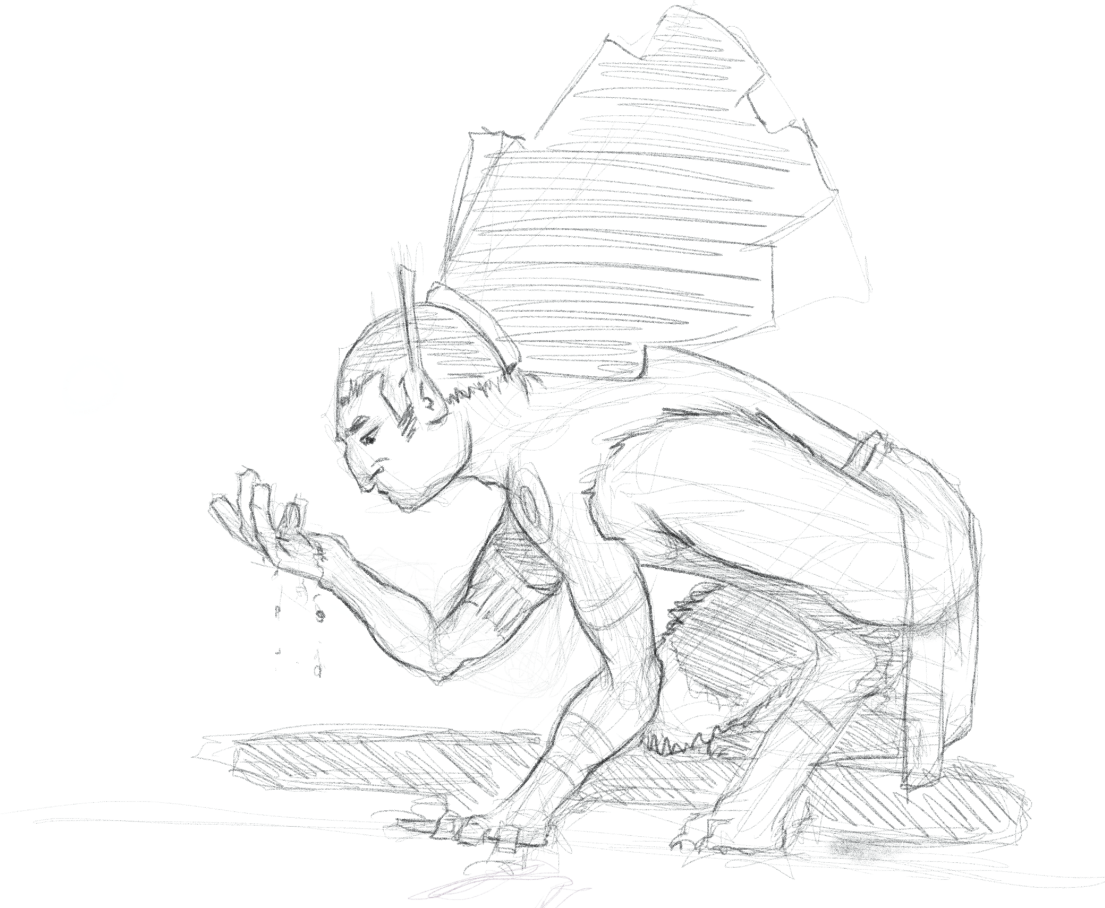


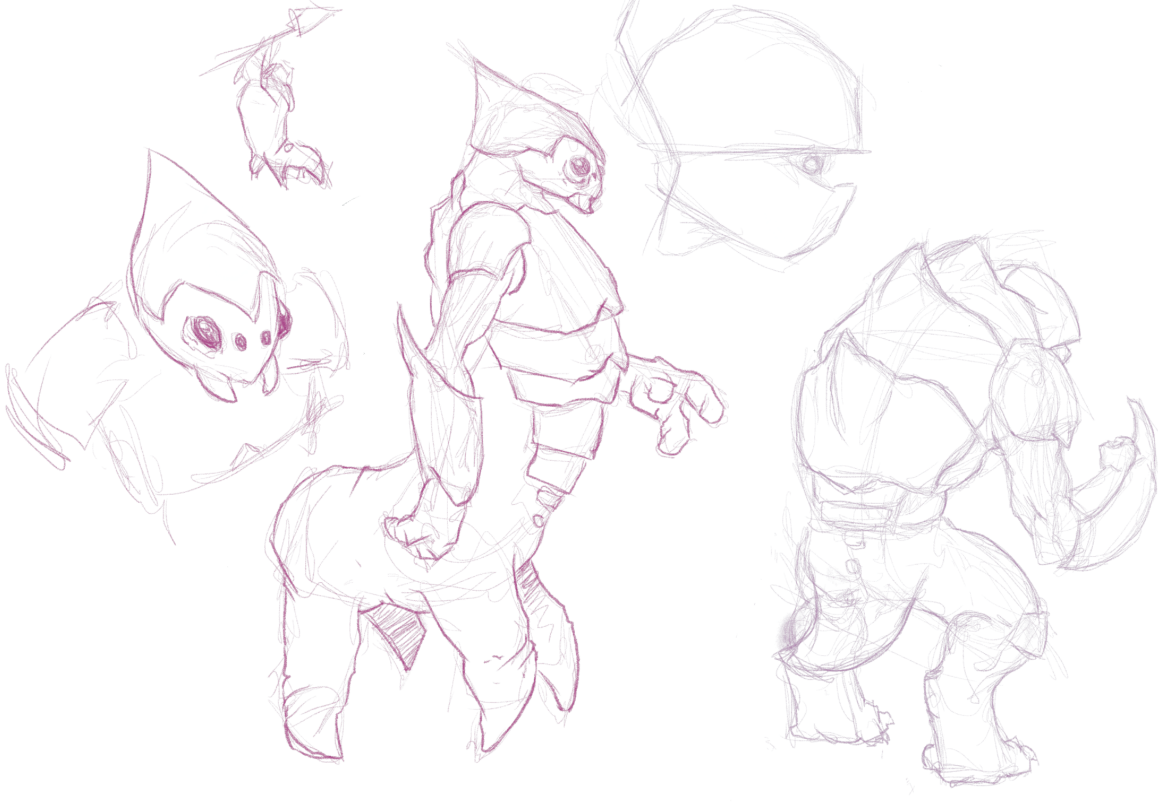


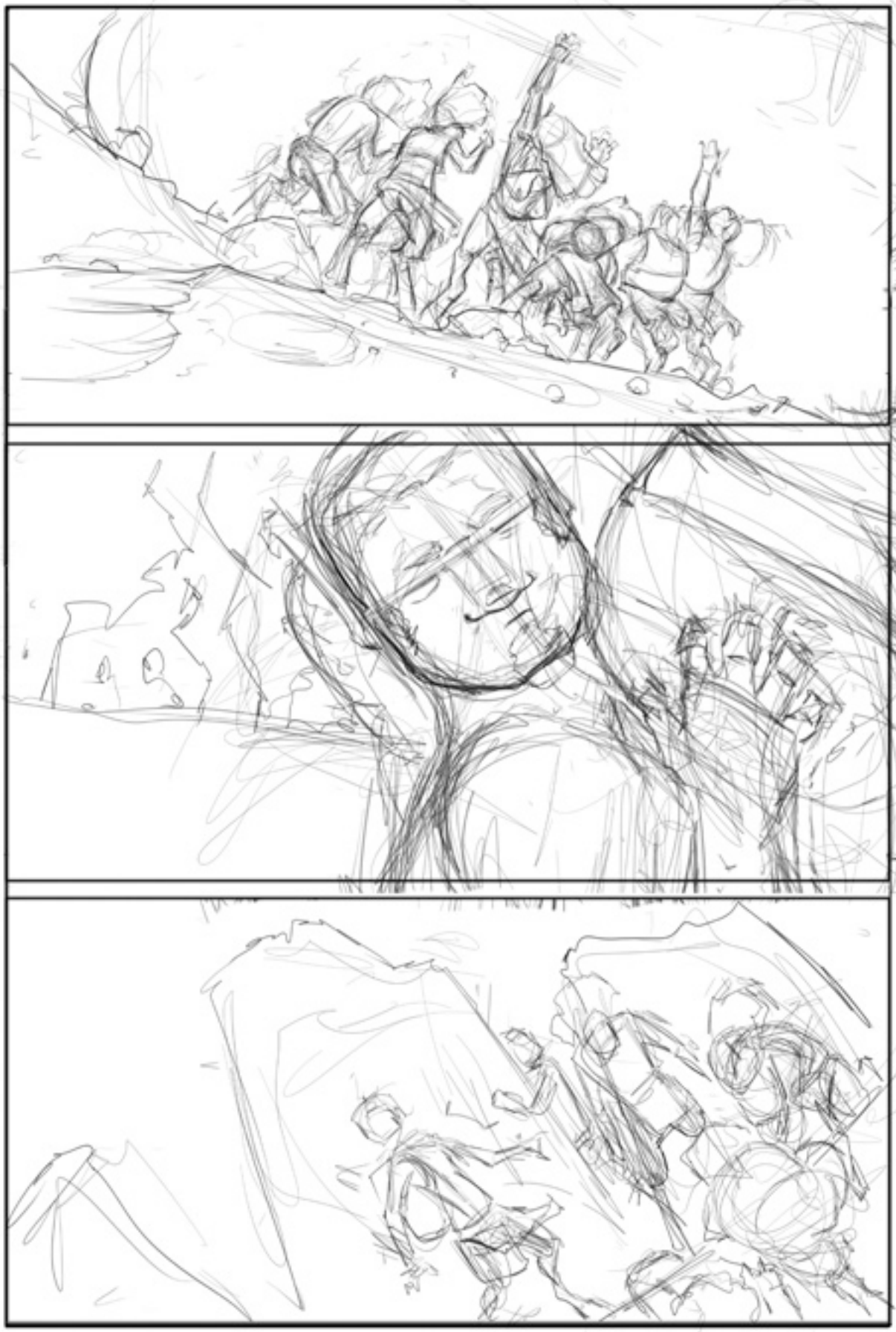
move jaw
back

I Like
Puppies!
2013

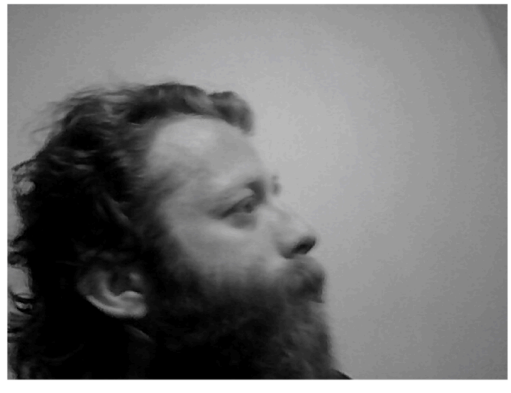








Nicholas Myers has been working in comics, for over 15 years, in many capacities: as a writer, an artist, a columnist and finally a cofounder of A.N.A Comics. He graduated from Kendall College of Art and Design with a BFA in Visual Communication and a minor in Illustration. He now continues his education (trial by fire) in life with his wife, Megan Myers and their two beautiful children. His major influences are Sam Kieth, Jeff Smith, Stephen King, Neil Gaiman, Rene Magritte and numerous others. He is constantly looking for new worlds and new ways to bring them from his head out into the light.



Richard Caldwell has been a freelance writer and editor since the Fall of 2000, working in print and online media whenever he can gnaw through his blue collar. His heroes are H.L. Mencken, Arthur Rimbaud, Buster Keaton, Groucho Marx, Alan Moore, Bertrand Russell, Steve Ditko, and his maternal grandfather. He currently owns and operates the Lottery Party, an online magazine of absurdism and citizen journalism, as well as providing half of the content for New Comics Day, a webzine dedicated to fake comic book news. He also contributes to Heavy Metal Magazine.

Stella: One of the archer/hunters. The oldest female of the group, she shares the responsibility of leadership. Very cool and collected, she's everyone's metaphorical super-cool big sister. She and Bucky are an item.

Buckminster: One of the metallurgists. Bucky is the leader, like a star quarterback and class president all in one. Tall, popular, smart, athletic and very likable, he and Stella are "the perfect couple".

Nina: One of the scroll-keepers. The keepers read, write, sing and draw and understand the symbols of the tribe. Quiet librarians, their job is to remember. Nina and Sylvia are sisters, with Nina being older of the two.

Fitzgerald: One of the archer/hunters. He's a big, strong, jovial guy with a slightly sick sense of humor. He tries to be the cook for the group. He's the right hand man for both Bucky and Stella, as he's also one of the oldest members of the group.

Meredith: One of the metallurgists. Their specialty involves making things, like proto- blacksmiths or engineers. Mer is the braniac nerd of the group, generally soft-spoken and contemplative.

Anthony: One of the gardeners. Anthony and Adelaide are an inseparable pair, always side by side, both are short and make a rather cute and happy couple. Anth is a cutup almost on par with Fitz. Almost.

Sylvia: One of the scroll-keepers. The younger sister of Nina, she is also the youngest of the whole group. Like her sister, Sylvia is very bright. She can also be very rambunctious and a bit of a know-it-all.

Gillespie: Only half of his original pair, he is the odd one out. The most quiet and clearly disgruntled and moody, he's the problem child of the group. But he’s also first in line to take on the boring or demanding jobs of moving stuff around.

Adelaide: One of the gardeners. She is Anthony's better half. Adelaide is a master farmer despite her youth. She and her guy are kinda hippy-ish and jolly in a hobbit-like way. She frightens easily though, being almost too innocent.

MAKE COMICS

9RAVENS

9RAVENSLLC.COM